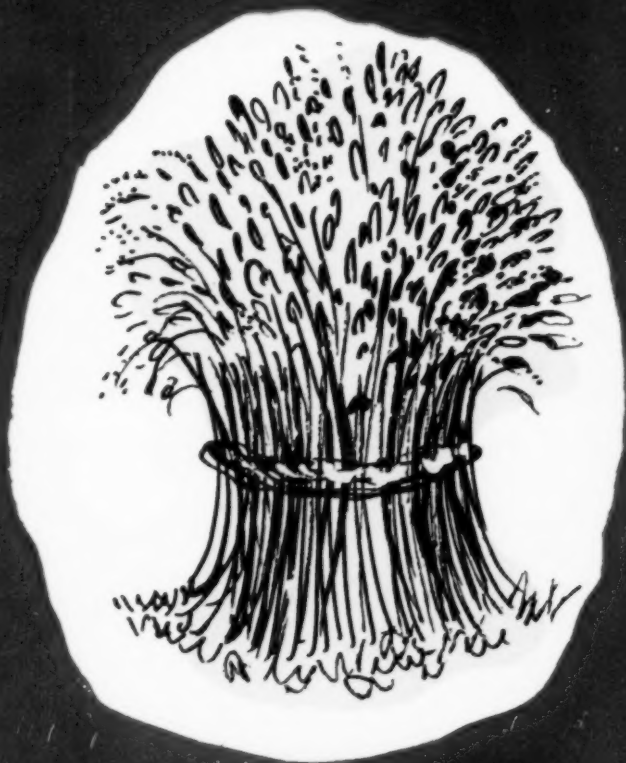


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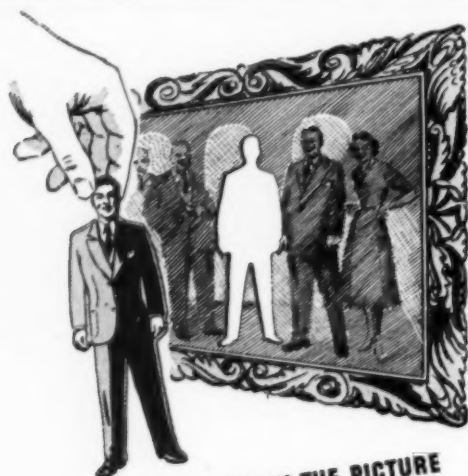


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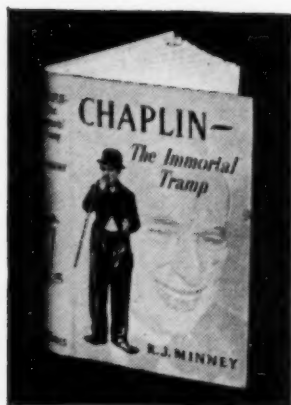
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Summer 1954

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(Pilgrim from Cairo to Cornhill !)
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But all comers among
Treat best the young ;
Fill the big brothers' knapsacks from thy bins,
But slip the Cup of Love in BENJAMIN'S.

From the Inaugurative Ode published in the first number.

THE first number of the CORNHILL magazine (published monthly at one shilling) appeared in January 1860 with Thackeray as Editor and George Smith as originator and proprietor. Beyond all expectations it sold 120,000 copies and the Editor fled to Paris complaining that he could not sleep 'for counting up his subscribers.'

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Editorial Note

place, to amuse and interest them. Fortunately for some folks, novels are as daily bread to others ; and fiction of course must form a part, but only a part, of our entertainment. We want, on the other hand, as much reality as possible—there is hardly any subject we *don't* want to hear about, from lettered and instructed men who are competent to speak on it. . . . I do not ask or desire to shine especially myself, but to take my part occasionally, and to invite pleasant and instructed gentlemen and ladies to contribute their share to the conversation. If we can only get people to tell what they know, pretty briefly and good-humouredly, and not in the manner obtrusively didactic, what a pleasant ordinary we may have. . . . The field is immensely wide ; the harvest perennial and rising everywhere.'

The publication of the thousandth number is a cheerful occasion particularly at a time when editors of literary miscellanies and magazines are inclined to suffer from insomnia for very different reasons. Although a centenary would be the proper moment for a record of the remarkable history of the CORNHILL, it is interesting—perhaps salutary—to look back after a run of 94 years at the first number which put its Editor to flight. It opened, without any editorial fanfare, directly into the first three chapters of *Framley Parsonage* which Anthony Trollope wrote especially for the magazine and which ran for sixteen instalments. Fiction was also represented by the first of six illustrated instalments of Thackeray's novel *Lovel the Widower*. There were three factual articles on China, the Volunteers, and the arctic search for Sir John Franklin ; a lukewarm essay on Leigh Hunt which contains the ambiguous opinion that 'he failed in practical life, because he was not guided in it by literature' and referred to him as a 'talking book' ; and the first instalment of *Studies in Animal Life* which embraced such appealing subjects as 'Early stages of a Frog and a Philosopher' and 'The Philosophy of the Infinitely Little.' Poetry was sparsely represented (although Tennyson and Monckton Milnes contributed to the following issue) by two poems of which one was 'Father Prout's Inaugurative Ode to the Author of *Vanity Fair*.'

The number ended with the first of Thackeray's *Roundabout Papers* in which he refers to St. Lucius who had founded St. Peter's church. It stood opposite to the publishing offices at 65 Cornhill from which

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MACMILLAN

Editorial Note

the magazine took its name because, as Thackeray said later, ' . . . it has a sound of jollity and abundance about it.'

What strikes the modern reader about the first number is the complete anonymity throughout (a fact that led to at least one false claimant to authorship of *Framley Parsonage*), the large number of serials, and the modesty with which it was presented. George Smith knew that his magazine could not succeed at that time without at least two popular novels running concurrently in serial form. It was this that influenced his choice of Thackeray as an editor. It was also this, as well as the charm of George Eliot's voice when she read to him the first chapters of *Romola*, that led him to commission the rest of the story for £10,000 (although on a matter of artistic conscience she surrendered £2,500 of this sum because she felt unable to divide the story into as many instalments as had originally been agreed). It was this, as well as an innate generosity and sense of occasion, that made him toss Anthony Trollope for the difference of £1,000 between what had finally been agreed as fair for a new serial and what Trollope had first suggested.¹ And it was this that led to the publication in the CORNHILL of such other novels as Mrs. Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*, Wilkie Collins' *Woman in White* and *Moonstone*, Meredith's *Harry Richmond*, Rider Haggard's *Jess*, Conan Doyle's *White Company*, and novels by Anthony Hope, Stanley Weyman, Henry Seton Merriman and A. E. W. Mason.

Few readers would now have the patience to spread the pleasure of a *Framley Parsonage* over sixteen months, and in the CORNHILL, which since the war has been published quarterly with occasional supplements, the place of the long serial has been taken by the short story and also by the first publication of short novels such as those by H. E. Bates, William Sansom, Evelyn Waugh and, most recently, *The Violins of Saint Jacques* by Patrick Leigh Fermor.

The great increase in the printing of short stories and articles in newspapers and periodicals of mass circulation has in part led magazines like the CORNHILL to concentrate more upon the excitement of presenting work unusual in length or in subject by authors of fame, and original work by young authors who have fame in front of

¹ It is perhaps wise to note that such payments usually included the right to publish in book form for a varying term of years.

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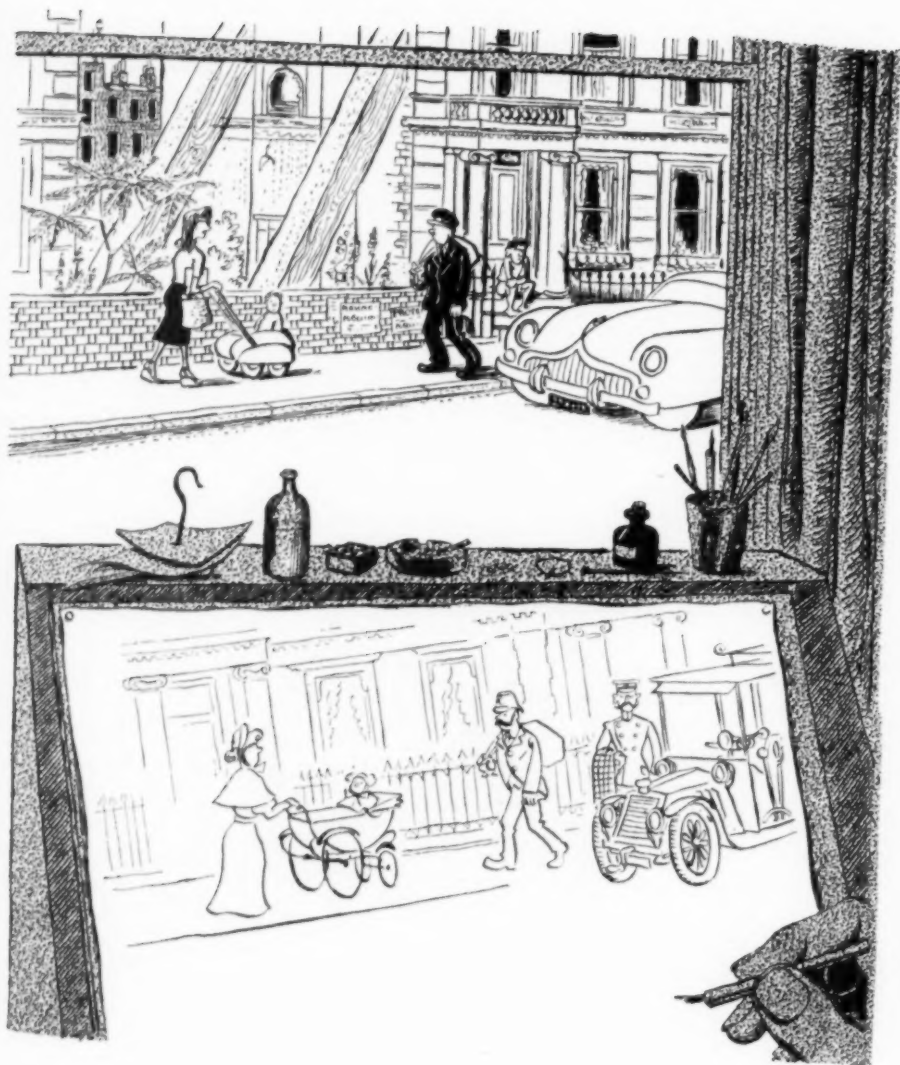
Editorial Note

them. Many books of lasting value have evolved from work first presented in the CORNHILL and with the support of its readers it is hoped that the list of distinguished contributors since 1860, from which a selection is printed at the end of this issue, will continue in the future like a path of discovery—'the field is immensely wide; the harvest perennial and rising everywhere.'

Thackeray likened the contributors and the readers of the new CORNHILL magazine to a company of travellers on an Atlantic steamer getting to know each other at the Captain's table on the first day out 'when there is no man, I think, who sits down but asks a blessing on his voyage.' On its thousandth issue the CORNHILL asks a blessing on its continuing voyage.



*An illustration from 'Lovel the Widower'
portraying Thackeray taking Time by the
forelock, 1860*



*'Take me back to dear old
Shepherd's Bush'*

Post-natal Thoughts

BY OSBERT LANCASTER



I WAS born in the eighth year of the reign of King Edward the Seventh in the parish of St. John's, Notting Hill. At that time Elgin Crescent, the actual scene of this event, was situated on the Marches of respectability. Up the hill to the south, tree-shaded and freshly stuccoed, stretched the squares and terraces of the last great stronghold of Victorian propriety: below to the north lay the courts and alleys of Notting Dale, through which, so my nurse terrifyingly assured me, policemen could only proceed in pairs.

The Crescent, like all border districts, was distinguished by a certain colourful mixture in its inhabitants, lacking in the more securely sheltered central area, grouped in this case round the church. While residence there was socially approved and no traces of 'slumminess' were as yet apparent, there did cling to it a slight whiff of Bohemianism from which Kensington Park Road, for instance, was quite free.

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Of the residents several were connected with the Stage, and some were foreign, but neither group carried these eccentricities to excessive lengths. Among the former were numbered a Mr. Maskelyne (or was it a Mr. Devant?) who lived on the corner, and, right next door to us, the talented authoress of *Where the Rainbow Ends*, whose daughter, a dashing hobble-skirted croquet-player, remains a vivid memory. The foreigners included some Japanese diplomats and a German family connected with the Embassy, whose son, a fair, chinless youth, was always at great pains to model his appearance on that of the Crown Prince Wilhelm, much to the delight of my father whom a long residence in Berlin had rendered expert in detecting the subtlest nuances of this elaborate masquerade. Fortunately my parents' arrival at Number 79 had done much to erase the principal blot on the fair name of the street, as our house had previously been the home of no less equivocal a figure than Madame Blavatsky.

Number 79 was a semi-detached stucco residence on three floors and a basement with a pillared porch, not differing stylistically in any way from the prevailing classicism of the neighbourhood. At the back was a small private garden opening into the large garden common to all the occupants of the south side of Elgin Crescent and the north side of Lansdowne Road. Such communal gardens, which are among the most attractive features of Victorian town-planning, are not uncommon in the residential districts of West London, but are carried to the highest point of their development in the Ladbroke estate. This area, which was laid out after the closure of the race-course that for a brief period encircled the summit of the hill, represents the last rational, unselfconscious piece of urban development in London. It was unfortunately dogged by misfortune, and the socially ambitious intention of Allom, the architect, and the promoters was largely defeated by the proximity of an existing pottery slum in Notting Dale, which received, just at the time the scheme was being launched, an enormous and deplorable influx of Irish labourers working on the Great Western Railway.

How different it all was in the years before 1914! Then the stucco, creamy and bright, gleamed softly beneath what seems in reminiscence to have been a perpetually cloudless sky. Geraniums in urns flanked each brass-enriched front door, while over the area

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railings moustachioed policemen made love to buxom cooks. And in every street there hung, all summer long, the heavy scent of limes.

The angel who drove the original inhabitants out of this gilt-edged Eden, not with a flaming sword but by a simple vanishing trick, was the domestic servant. The houses, even the small ones like ours, were planned on generous lines and labour-saving was still not only an unrealised but un-thought-of ideal. Fortunately my parents whose joint income at the time of my birth amounted to all of £600 a year were able to maintain a cook, a housemaid, a nurse and a boot-boy; my mother, moreover, had been through the hard school of a Victorian grandmother's household, and herself undertook such specialised, and now obsolete, labours as cleaning the chandeliers, washing the rubber-plant and superintending the linen.

The ideal of the servantless civilisation, already fully realised in the United States, is doubtless a noble one, and those who so bravely, and possibly sincerely, maintain that they feel degraded by being waited on by their fellow human beings compel our admiration, although personally they invariably provoke me to confess that I can tolerate without discomfort being waited on hand and foot. But it is an ideal attended by one grave disadvantage—whom is there left for the children to talk to? A mother's love is all very well, but it is only a poor substitute for good relations with the cook.

In my own case, the centre of the below-stairs world was Kate the housemaid. This remarkable woman, gaunt, near-sighted and invariably prepared for the worst, not only endeared herself to me by acts of kindness to which I could always be certain no strings were attached, but also provided my only contact with the real world which lay beyond the confines of my isolated nursery. Quick-witted and an omnivorous reader of the popular press, it was her habit to converse largely in political slogans and popular catch-phrases. Thus when I was detected sliding unobtrusively into the larder she would call out "Hands off the people's food," and if when driven out she suspected that I still retained some loot she would advance with simulated menace, jabbing the upturned palm of her left hand with the index finger of her right, in a gesture which a dozen cartoons of the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George, had rendered universally familiar, exclaiming "Put it there!" And always when

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I asked what was for dinner she would remind me of Mr. Asquith and bid me "Wait and see." But by no means all of her sources of verbal inspiration were political; better even than the Harmsworth Press she loved the music-hall, and her evenings off were regularly spent at one or other of the many suburban houses then still happily flourishing on the sites of future Odeons. Her favourite performers were Wilkie Bard, George Mozart and Alfred Lester, and while engaged on her endless scrubbing and dusting she could usually be heard informing the household that she had got a motto, or wanted to sing in opera, or desired to be taken back to dear old Shepherd's Bush.

The popular music of the Edwardian era played an important rôle in the national life: these music-hall songs and ballads have today been so weakened and degraded by intensive plugging and self-conscious revival over the air that they are now as far removed from their former spontaneous popularity as are the careful prancings of latter-day Morris dancers from the village revels of the Elizabethans. In the strictly stratified social world of my childhood they seemed to me in my bourgeois pram to be the one thing enjoyed in common by the world represented by the whistling errand-boy and the ladies I occasionally observed, humming gaily, if a little off-key, as they emerged from the glittering paradise of *The Devonshire Arms* (in passing which my nurse always developed an additional turn of speed and on which she would never comment), and the world of which the pillars were Kate and my father. I specify my father rather than my parents as his taste was almost identical with Kate's (he perhaps rated Harry Lauder a little higher than she did), whereas my mother's was more accurately represented by *Traumerei* and *Songe d'Automne*, beautiful works, doubtless, but hardly with so universal an appeal.

For sheer pleasure few methods of progression, one comes gradually to realise, can compare with the perambulator. The motion is agreeable, the range of vision extensive and one has always before one's eyes the rewarding spectacle of a grown-up maintaining prolonged physical exertion. Moreover, the sensation of pasha-like power which all this induces is not illusory for, by the simple device of repeatedly jettisoning a teddy-bear or a rattle, any display of independence on the part of the mahout can successfully be countered,

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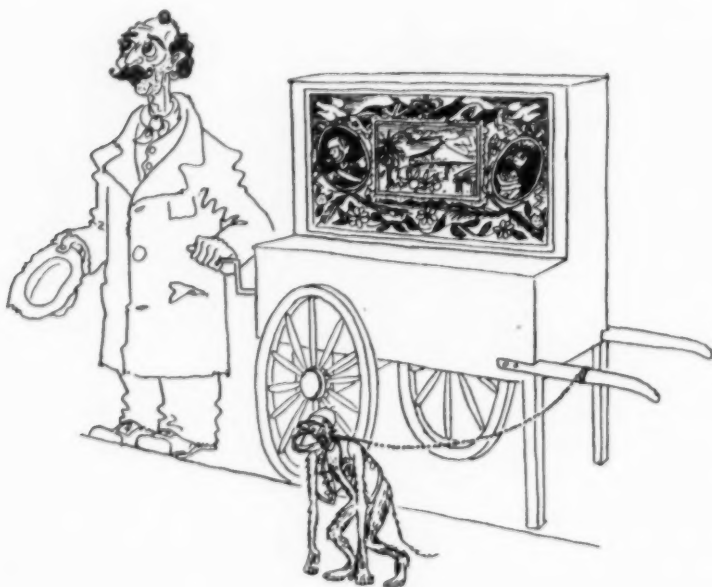
and should she, maddened beyond endurance, be provoked to reprisals a piteous howling will soon attract the friendly interest of sympathetic passers-by and expose her to public, if unjustified, rebuke. The gondola alone, I think, can compare with the pram for pleasure, but only on those occasions when one is certain that someone else will charge himself with the nerve-racking financial dispute which will inevitably mark the journey's end.



A few additional figures there were who stood in a rather closer relation to the small world of Number 79 than the anonymous ranks of passers-by I observed from my pram: they, while obviously debarred from the full club privileges of Kate, the cook, my parents and the boot-boy, yet enjoyed, as it were, the facilities of country membership. The Italian organ-grinder, a martyr to gastric troubles, who regularly appeared every Thursday afternoon; the crossing-sweeper in Ladbroke Grove whose function the internal combustion engine was even then rapidly rendering as decorative as that of the King's Champion; the muffin man, the lamplighter and the old gentleman who came out on winter evenings to play the harp by the foggy radiance of the street lamp—Dickensian figures who have obviously no rôle to play in the Welfare State and have left no successors. Doubtless their disappearance should be welcomed, and yet they did not appear to be either down-trodden or exploited: indeed,

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the impression they gave was chiefly of a proper consciousness of the important rôle in the social fabric played by muffin men, lamplighters and organ-grinders. Certainly their spirits seemed higher and their manners were undoubtedly better than those of the majority of the present-day beneficiaries of enlightened social legislation. Even the crossing-sweeper, despite his ostentatious rags and traditional whine, displayed a certain individuality and professional pride which one seldom observes in the hygienically uniformed Municipal Refuse Disposal Officer.



Apart from such figures, my relations and, later, fellow-pupils at my kindergarten, the most vivid and indirectly influential personality of my early childhood was our next-door neighbour to the west, old Mrs. Ullathorne. This imposing and always slightly mysterious *grande-dame*, with whom I was bidden to tea at regular intervals, represented an era which, even at that date, seemed almost incredibly remote. She had enjoyed, so it was said, a considerable success at the court of Napoleon the Third, and there were prominently dis-

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played amongst the palms and bibelots of her crowded drawing-room innumerable *carte-de-visite* size photographs of dashing cuirassiers in peg-top trousers sporting waxed moustaches and elegant lip-beards, and of crinolined beauties who had somewhat surprisingly elected to put on full ball-dress and all their diamonds for a good long read, of what appeared from the binding to be books of devotion, seated on rustic benches in a vaguely Alpine landscape. Certainly Mrs. Ullathorne herself gave a very definite impression of belonging to another, and far more sophisticated, world than that of Edwardian Notting Hill. Alone among all our female acquaintances she was heavily and unashamedly made-up (even the dashing daughter of our playwright neighbour, who was thought to be a Suffragette and known to smoke, never, I fancy, went further than a discreet use of *papiers poudrés*). But the style in which her *maquillage* was conceived proclaimed her way behind, rather than daringly ahead, of the times. The whole surface of her face was delicately pale and matt, and only by imperceptible degrees did the pearly white take on a faint rosy flush above the cheek-bones; the eyebrows, which although carefully shaped were not plucked thin, were a deep uncompromising auburn, contrasting very strikingly with the faded parma violet of the lids. Her toupet, a rich mahogany in colour, was dressed in tight curls and fringes in the manner of the reigning queen. The whole effect was one of extreme fragility which, one felt, the slightest contact or even a sneeze would irretrievably wreck, and was as far removed from that achieved by modern methods as is a Nattier from a Modigliani.

Whether due to Mrs. Ullathorne's long residence in foreign parts or to her extreme age, she displayed another peculiarity which set her still further apart from the rest of my world—she invariably insisted that in place of the customary handshake I should bow smartly from the waist and kiss her hand. This was for me always rather an alarming ordeal, and I can still see that long white hand delicately extended, criss-crossed with the purple hawthers of her veins standing out in as high relief as the yellowish diamonds in her many rings, and experience once more the ghastly apprehension that one day, overcome by unbearable curiosity, I should take a sharp nip at the most prominent of those vital pipelines.

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The influence which the old lady exercised on my early development was not, however, direct, but the result of a gift. One day she presented me with a large quarto volume bound in dark green leather into which, with incredible neatness, she had in childhood pasted scraps.

Although I can still vividly remember the enchantment which was renewed every time I opened that magic volume, it is only quite fortuitously that its peculiar flavour, recognisable if faint, now and then returns to me. No effort of conscious memory will work the miracle, but just occasionally the sight of swans upon a castle lake, or some peculiar combination of Prussian blue and carmine, or the feel beneath the fingers of the embossed paper lace on an old-fashioned Christmas card, will play the part of Proust's Madeleine and fire the train. Many must have received such volumes in childhood, but not many I fancy so perfect an example of the genre as this; for the artists of no age have ever surpassed those of the romantic period in the production of keepsakes and *culs-de-lampes*, and this volume had been compiled at exactly the right moment. The shakoed, hand-coloured infantrymen, who so gallantly assaulted that vaguely Oriental stronghold, were the soldiers of Louis Philippe subduing the fierce Goums of Abd-el-Kebir; this mysterious steel-engraved lake shadowed by twilit mountains was Lamartine; and the rather over-plumed knights, their armour gleaming with applied tinsel, were undoubtedly setting out for the Eglinton Tournament.

The charm and excitement of those vividly coloured vignettes must have made a powerful appeal to the imagination of any child but in my case it was reinforced by the contrast they provided to the illustrations in my other books. My mother suffered from that perpetual illusion common to all parents that the books which had meant the most to her in her own childhood (or possibly those which, later in life, she had persuaded herself had then been her favourites) would awaken a similar delighted response in her offspring. My nursery library was therefore well stocked with the illustrated fairy-tales of the late 'seventies and early 'eighties. It cannot be denied that the skill of the great nineteenth-century school of English wood-engraving was then at its height and that many of these volumes were, in their way, masterpieces. Nevertheless, not only did I dislike them

all with the solitary exception of Tenniel's *Alice*, but certain of them awoke in me feelings of fear and revulsion.

I do not think, looking back, that my reaction was purely personal nor wholly abnormal. Children are all firmly in favour of representational art up to a certain point (my lack of enthusiasm for Walter Crane, for instance, was caused by his tendency to subordinate accurate representation to decorative embroidery and was of a wholly different kind to my dislike of Linley Sambourne), but that point is reached when realism is carried over into the third dimension. They will welcome, and indeed demand, the maximum amount of realistic detail provided it is flat, but once an artist starts to give his illustrations depth and to visualise his figures in the round, his pre-adolescent public will begin to lose interest. Thanks to the incredibly responsive instrument which such figures as the Dalziels had made of the wood-engraver, the book illustrators of the 'eighties were able to exploit the third dimension, which still possessed in this medium the charm of comparative novelty, to their hearts' content, and they certainly made the most of the opportunity. The buxom flanks of the Water Babies sprang from the flat page with a startling illusion of rotundity; the more unpleasant creations of Hans Andersen's imagination displayed a devastating solidity; indeed, certain artists went rather too far in their three-dimensional enthusiasm and over-stepping the bounds of realism achieved an effect which can only be described, in the strictest sense of the word, as surrealist. In our own day this irrational element in the wood-engraved illustrations of the late nineteenth century, against which I as a child had unconsciously reacted (in exactly the same way, incidentally, as did my own children some twenty-five years later), has been recognised and skilfully utilised for his own terrifying purposes by Max Ernst in such works as 'Le Lion de Belfort' and 'La Femme à cent têtes.'

Thus the world of Mrs. Ullathorne's scrap-book, with its brilliant green lawns and flat improbable trees peopled by kindly gendarmes in enormous tricorne hats and little girls in pork-pie hats and striped stockings practising archery in château parks, took on in addition to its own proper attraction the welcome character of a safe retreat from that other, boring yet terrifying, world of all too completely realised fantasy.

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The work from which, next to the scrap-book, I derived the greatest enjoyment was also uncontemporary, being two bound volumes of the *Picture Magazine*, to which my father had regularly subscribed during his school days at the very end of the Victorian age. This admirable periodical nicely combined instruction with amusement, and among the regular features were a series of simple pseudo-scientific experiments (a cock mesmerised into following a chalked line with its beak and a daring criminal escaping from Vincennes by means of a home-made parachute), accounts of travel and exploration (whiskered tourists being hauled up to the monasteries of the Meteora in nets), and, best of all, strip cartoons by Caran d'Ache. In addition were included from time to time four-page supplements of photographs of the most distinguished figures in one particular walk of contemporary life—soldiers, scientists, painters . . . Of these my favourite was that devoted to the rulers of sovereign states who, thank Heaven, were at that date far more numerous than they are today.

Those long rows of royal torsos adorned with every variety of epaulette, plastron, and aiguillette, the necks compressed into collars of unbelievable height and tightness, the manly, if padded chests, hung with row upon row of improbable crosses and stars and criss-crossed by watered silk ribbons and tangles of gold cords, surmounted by so many extraordinary countenances adorned with immense moustaches, upstanding in the style of Potsdam or down-sweeping in the style of Vienna, some fish-eyed, some monocled, some vacant, some indignant but all self-conscious, had for me a fascination which never failed. And nor, when I had learnt to read, did the captions prove a disappointment; such names as Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Bourbon-Parme, Saxe-Coburg-Gotha held for me a flavour of high romance to which the very difficulty of pronouncing added rather than detracted. How drab by contrast did the still small handful of republican presidents appear, and how deep was my contempt for those pince-nezed, bourgeois figures to whom a gaudy silken diagonal across their stiff-shirted bosoms could not lend an air of even spurious distinction!

Incredible as it may seem, many of these paladins who now appear far more remote from our modern experience than Attila or Ivan



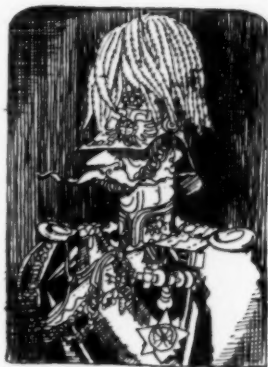
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Young A



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the Terrible were actually still more or less firmly on their thrones at the time when I first grew familiar with their appearance. The whiskered porcine features of Franz Josef were still regularly revealed to his loyal Viennese as he drove every morning through the Hofburg ; hardly a day passed without his German colleague, dressed as an Admiral, a Hussar, a Uhlan, a Cuirassier, or a Highland sportsman, making an appearance in the illustrated papers ; and somewhere hidden away in the heart of the plaster mazes of Dolmabahçeh, that last bastard offspring of a frenzied rococo which had reared itself so surprisingly on the shores of the Bosphorus, apprehensive, invisible but undoubtedly there, was Abdul the Damned.

Of all this I was at that time naturally unaware. All these characters were no more and no less real to me than Jack the Giant-Killer and the Infant Samuel of whom my mother was accustomed to read aloud, or Hackenschmidt and the Terrible Turk, in whose exploits the boot-boy took so keen an interest. Only Kaiser Wilhelm was for me in any way, and that very remotely, connected with real life ; for I had once been sent a box of toy soldiers by an old friend of my mother, who was one of that monarch's A.D.C.s, and whose photograph in the full-dress uniform of the Prussian Guard stood on the piano.

Less colourful but more familiar were the pages devoted to the more prominent contemporary divines. No flourishing moustachios nor jewelled orders here, but every variety of whisker from the restrained mutton-chop to the full Newgate fringe, and billowing acres of episcopal lawn. At the time these portraits were taken the social prestige of the Establishment, and even, on a different level, of Nonconformity, was at its height, and although it had become a little dimmed in the intervening years it was still comparatively great. How complete has been the subsequent eclipse, a brief study of the representative novels of high life during the last half century will amply demonstrate ; although the regiments of handsome curates, worldly Archdeacons and courtly Bishops who thronged the pages of late Victorian fiction thinned out a lot in Edwardian times, a sharp-tongued Mayfair incumbent or two, ex-curates doubtless of Canon Chasuble, still make a regular appearance in the tales of Saki ; but in all the works of Michael Arlen I cannot recall a single dog-collar

and the solitary cleric to appear in the novels of Mr. Waugh is Fr. Rothschild, S.J.

In real life, anyhow in the society in which my parents moved, the clergy still played a prominent and honoured rôle. Their merits as preachers were eagerly discussed and the exact degree of their 'Highness' or 'Lowness' keenly debated. Many of the originals of those portraits were, therefore, quite familiar to me by name as being preachers under whom members of my family had at one time or another sat, while on the knees of one of them, Prebendary Webb-Peploe, a celebrated Evangelical preacher from whose well-attended Watch Night sermons the more impressionable members of the congregation were regularly carried out on stretchers, I myself had once had the honour of being perched.

It may seem strange that my infant literature should have been so exclusively out-of-date, but at that time the modern renaissance of the children's book was in its infancy, and the prevailing standard of contemporary productions was unbelievably low. Exceptions there were, however, and I can vividly remember the pleasure I derived from the Nursery History of England, illustrated by that happily still flourishing artist, George Morrow, and, a little later, from the works of Edmund Dulac.

To the enjoyment of the pictures, appreciation of the text was soon added, as thanks to the brilliant educational methods of my mother I learned to read at a very tender age. Her system, simple as it was effective, was based on a chocolate alphabet. This was spread out twice a week on the dining-room table and such letters as I recognised I was allowed to eat; later, when my knowledge of the alphabet was faultless, I was entitled to such letters as I could form into a new word. Although never strong in arithmetic I soon grasped the simple fact that the longer the word the more the chocolate, and by the time I could spell 'suffragette' without an error this branch of my education was deemed complete and a tendency to biliousness had become increasingly apparent.

Once my ability was firmly established I read everything on which I could lay my hands, from *The Times* leaders to the preface to the Book of Common Prayer. This impressive zeal was not, I fancy, the result of any exceptional thirst for knowledge, but rather of

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boredom, and was far commoner among children at that time than it is today. Such cinemas as then existed were regarded by my parents as undesirably sensational and notoriously unhygienic, and there was no compulsion on grown-ups to make any pretence of enjoying the company of the young who were, quite rightly, expected to amuse themselves. The only addition which modern science had made to the sources of infant pleasure available to my parents, or even my grandparents, was the gramophone. On this archaic machine I was permitted, as a great treat, to listen to the exaggeratedly Scots voice of Harry Lauder, just audible through a barrage of scratching and whining, singing 'Stop your tickling, Jock,' or to the waltzes of Archibald Joyce rendered, rather surprisingly, by the Earl of Lonsdale's private band and recorded on discs half an inch thick by Messrs William Whiteley.

My appearances in the drawing-room, where the gramophone was kept, were determined in accordance with fixed rules, as indeed were those of almost all the children of my generation—on weekdays half an hour before going to bed and half an hour in the morning to practise my scales, the latter period being prolonged to an hour on Tuesdays when Miss Pearce, poor long-suffering woman, came to wrestle with my highly personal rendering of 'The Merry Peasant.' Apart from these daily occasions, the only times when the room knew me were when there were visitors.

The pattern of social life in archaic Bayswater, and all points west, differed almost as much from that prevailing today as it did from that of mediaeval times. Fixed rules prevailed governing the exact hours and days on which visits took place, the number and size of the cards left and when and how they should be 'cornered,' the clothes to be worn, and the length of time which one was expected to stay; even such trivial gestures as those with which the ladies, once perched on the Edwardian Hepplewhite chairs, were accustomed to throw back their veils and roll down their gloves at the wrists, were formal and standardised. There was no casual dropping-in for drinks, as drinking between meals was confined exclusively to the restorative masculine whisky-and-soda (or among the older generation 'a little b. and s.')—almost exclusively, for curiously enough I do recollect among certain of my older female relatives the ritual partaking of a

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glass of port wine and a slice of plum cake at eleven o'clock in the morning, although this was generally regarded as an old-fashioned survival only to be justified on grounds of old age or a delicate constitution. There was no ringing up and asking people round for a little cocktail party as we had no telephone and cocktails were still unknown, save perhaps to certain rather 'fast' Americans—the sort of people who patronised those 'tango teas' of which the papers spoke.

Where no casual appearance could possibly take place, and all was fixed and pre-ordained, I knew exactly when the summons to present myself below would come. My mother, like all the ladies of her acquaintance, had her Thursdays, when the silver teapot and the best china would be shiningly conspicuous and her friends and relations would dutifully appear to be entertained with cucumber sandwiches, *petit-fours*, slices of chocolate cake and, in winter, toasted buns. Those who could not come, either because the number of their friends who had also chosen Thursday as their 'At Home' day precluded a personal appearance at each or for some other valid reason, sent round their cards.

My own entry was always carefully timed by Nurse to coincide with the moment when the teacups, with which I was hardly to be trusted, were already distributed and the sandwiches and cakes were waiting to be handed round. My performance on these occasions was invariably masterly. Clad in a *soigné* little blue silk number, with Brussels lace collar and cut steel buckles on my shoes, in which I had recently made my first public appearance as a page at a wedding in All Saints, Margaret Street, I passed round the solids in a manner which combined efficiency with diffidence in exactly the right proportions. Moreover, although conspicuously well-behaved, I could always be relied on to go into the *enfant terrible* act at exactly the right moment, and produce embarrassing questions or comments of a laughable kind that yet just stopped short of being offensively personal or too outspokenly apt. The freely expressed admiration which my performance always produced was almost as gratifying to me as it was to my mother, particularly in such cases where I considered it was likely to pay a handsome dividend next Christmas. Only among my Lancaster relations was the rapture apt to be a little modified; my aunt Hetty, for instance, was more than once heard to remark



that if Mamie were not careful dear little Osbert would soon be developing a deplorable tendency to 'play to the gallery.'

The only other times (apart from the many-coursed dinner parties of the period, a fixed number of which my parents were accustomed to give during the year, which naturally affected my life not at all) on which visitors appeared was when country relatives were in London and were of sufficient age or importance to be asked to tea or luncheon for themselves alone. The most memorable of these was my great-aunt Martha, not only for her own personality and appearance which were remarkable enough, but also for the manner of her arrival. Having been born early in the reign of George IV she was relatively fixed in her ways, and when she came to stay with her younger brother, my grandfather, the victoria and the greys were put at her disposal: their use in London had otherwise come to be increasingly abandoned in favour of the Renault, and they were only still maintained, I fancy, out of respect for Mundy, the elderly coachman, and a deep-rooted enthusiasm for harness horses which was general in my father's family.

I can still recall the stately dignified clop-clop, quite different in rhythm from that of the brisk single-horsed baker's van or the heavy proletarian tattoo of the pantechnicon, which announced that Aunt Martha was rounding the corner, and which I had been eagerly awaiting at the nursery window for half an hour or more. Quickly snatching up some lumps of sugar from Nurse, I was down the stairs and at the horses' heads almost before the footman was off the box. Looking back, I confess myself lost in admiration at my youthful temerity, as nowadays my reluctance to go fumbling round the muzzles of relatively unfamiliar quadrupeds would hardly be so easily overcome.

Great-Aunt Martha, although even older than Mrs. Ullathorne, gave no such impression of fragility; on the contrary she appeared, and indeed she was, exceedingly robust and just about as fragile as well-seasoned teak. Her eyebrows, which were thick as doormats, were jet-black and her hair, which she wore severely parted in the middle and swept smoothly down over each cheek, was only streaked with grey. She never appeared abroad save in the prescribed Victorian uniform for old ladies—black bonnet enriched with violets, a black

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jet-trimmed shoulder cape and very tight black kid gloves—which was becoming increasingly rare even at that date and now only survives among pantomime dames. Her features were strong and masculine and bore a close resemblance to those of Sir Robert Walpole as revealed in Van Loos' portrait, and she retained a marked Norfolk accent. Tolerant and composed, she radiated an air of genial and robust common sense, which none of the rest of the family displayed, anyhow in so marked a degree; and alone of all the Lancasters she professed a keen interest in food and was reputed to be the finest hand with a dumpling between King's Lynn and Norwich. In addition she was never at any pains to conceal an earthy relish for scandal which, linked to a prodigious memory, made her a far more entertaining, and quite possibly a more accurate, authority on the genealogies of most Norfolk families than Burke.

Despite her outward Victorianism, Great-Aunt Martha nevertheless always gave a strong but indefinable impression of belonging to a still earlier era. This must, I think, have arisen largely from her gestures, for gestures remain the surest and least easily eradicable of all period hallmarks. Tricks and turns of speech are good guides but are generally undetectable when combined with a strong regional accent; clothes and hair styles may be deliberately and consciously adopted for their period value; but gestures are easy neither unconsciously to lose nor deliberately to acquire. One has only to compare the most accurate reconstruction of a 'twenties scene in a modern revue with a thirty-year-old film to appreciate this truth; no matter how skilfully the accents and fashions of the epoch may have been recaptured on the stage the film will always reveal a dozen little gestures—a peculiar fluttering of the hand or some trick of standing—which at the time were so natural as to be completely unnoticeable, and of which even the most knowledgeable spectator with an adult memory of the period and the keenest eye for detail will have remained completely unaware and may even, on seeing them again after a lapse of thirty years, fail to realise are the very hallmarks of that genuineness of which he is nevertheless completely convinced.

The particular gesture of Aunt Martha's which I found so revealing and which, had I not seen her so frequently employ it, I should have come to consider a stereotyped illustrator's convention, no more

having an origin in nature than the Fascist salute or the sudden heart-clutching of an Italian tenor, was that with which she invariably registered surprise. This was an emotion constantly evoked in her by the unexpected brilliance (as she thought it) of her great-nephews and nieces or the extraordinary things of which the newspapers were nowadays so full. Maintaining her usual upright but placid attitude when seated, she would suddenly elevate her eyebrows to a remarkable height and in perfect unison raise her hands, which had been lying quietly in her lap, smartly at right angles to her wrists with palms outwards, at the same time, but more slowly, lifting her forearms until the tips of her outspread fingers were level with her shoulders, in a manner that was perfectly familiar to me from the illustrations of Cruikshank.

Such visits as those of Aunt Martha were, however, few and far between, and the rhythm of our daily life, monotonous as it would seem to a modern child, was but seldom interrupted by these intrusions from the outside world. Thus the drawing-room saw me chiefly in its familiar everyday dress, very different from the unnatural spruceness and formality it assumed on social occasions, and so it remains in my memory. Summoned down for my daily visit I would take my accustomed place beside my mother for the evening reading. My enjoyment at this performance depended in a very large measure on the choice of the book, which was governed partly by the day and partly by my mother's mood.

On Sundays and holy days, or on occasions when some recent display of temper or disobedience on my part was thought to have merited implied reproof, the volume chosen was a ghastly selection of pious fables, illustrated in that wood-engraved style I so much abominated. What particularly infuriated me about the author, and still infuriates me, was not so much his unctuous style, nor even the pious nature of the themes, but his abominable deceit. The hero, some gallant knight, would don his armour, leap on his trusty steed and go galloping off in pursuit of dragons in the most approved style, and then, just as my interest was getting aroused, it was revealed that the armour, on the exact style and manufacture of which I had been excitedly speculating, was the armour of Righteousness, the steed one learnt answered to the name of Perseverance, and the

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dragons against which the hero was off to do battle were called Self-Love, Indolence and Bad Temper. Thus one cold puff of piety instantly and irrevocably shattered the warm colourful world of romance and fantasy which had been building up in my imagination, and my rage, though concealed, was boundless. But it was years before the sight of that thick little royal blue volume, so guileless and optimistic is the infant mind, warned me to expect the worst.

But in the course of time my so evident lack of response led to the gradual abandonment of this depressing volume, and the occasions on which I was firmly removed from the study of some illustrated volume of my own choice to listen to the far from hair-raising adventures of some smug paladin of evangelical piety became fewer and fewer. And in the picture which I chiefly retain of these early evenings of my childhood it plays no part.

The firelight is gleaming and flashing from the polished brass of the heavily defended hearth; on one side sits my father, freshly returned from the city, reading one of the pastel-coloured evening papers of the time; on the other my mother, studying with well-founded distrust the double-page spread of the interior of the newly-launched 'Titanic' in the *Illustrated London News*. The pleasantly depressing strains of 'The Count of Luxembourg,' rendered of course by the Earl of Lonsdale's private band, faintly echo amidst the shiny chintz and gold-mounted watercolours, speaking of a far distant world of dashing Hussars and tight-waisted beauties in long white gloves with aigrettes in their golden hair, forever dancing up and down some baroque staircase of exceptional length. While in the middle, flat on his stomach, lies a small boy of engaging appearance poring over an enormous green volume, the faintly dusty smell of the fur hearthrug heavy in his nostrils, perfectly happy counting the medals stretched across the manly chest of the Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern Sigmaringen.

A Moroccan Journey without Moors

BY PETER MAYNE

Casablanca. Monday night.

Maurice calls what we are doing '*un déplacement*'—and, for me, the term has all sorts of overtones. 'Travel' has a hopeful, exciting ring to it, new worlds opening up, the eyes starry with new experience and wonder. But '*déplacement*' is different. Neither of us in the least wanted to leave Marrakesh, but both had reasons for visiting Tangier some time soon, and the south-Moroccan high summer is the moment for it. Marrakesh in August is a cruel city. Displaced in this way I feel a cloak of anxiety round my shoulders, a sense of 'refugee' from something known and loved.

This being so I readily fell in with Maurice's suggestion to spend the first heat-stricken night of our displacement in the house of a friend of his, here in Casablanca. She is a friend of long standing, it seems. 'She is full of heart,' Maurice says, and we both thought that it would be more agreeable to break journey in her comfortable, friendly home than in some horrid, cheap, third-class lodging house. This explains why we are here under Madame Mansarde's roof in a Casablanca suburb.

Madame Mansarde had warned us that her work might prevent her from bringing the car to the station to meet us. She is evidently a woman whose life is filled with charitable works of one kind and another, voluntary, unpaid, mostly with the Moorish very young or very old. So we came straight to her home on arrival. It is a long way out from the centre of the town and, although there appears to be a bus service, actual buses are infrequent and we came by cab. It was nice to be welcomed by a plump, smiling negress maid. We were shown to the room we are to share—that we are at this moment sharing—with its two fat beds and a water-colour of a southern Berber fastness.

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I am writing this late in the night. Madame Mansarde got home at about nine this evening. This was convenient from our point of view as it gave us time to settle in comfortably, but for Madame Mansarde the hour suggested a long, weary working-day at last behind her. No wonder she looked worn out.

It seems that she went to the station to meet us. In fact she went twice. The first train she met was shortly before four this afternoon, and the second at something just after eight. We had actually arrived on the eighteen-forty-three. I thought Maurice had mentioned the time in his telegram announcing our arrival, but he says perhaps he forgot. It is embarrassing to have caused Madame Mansarde all this needless trouble, but she waved our apologies aside.

"You see, I managed to slip away from the old folks' rest-centre in time for the four o'clock train," she told us, "and then I went to the station again for the eight o'clock—I was luckily able to squeeze it in between my evening visit to the orphanage and a dash to the Commissariat de Police to report the theft of the tools from my car. Imagine! They were stolen while I was in the Goutte de Lait this morning! There's gratitude for you!"

"Goutte de Lait?" I asked.

"Yes. I'm not officially concerned, of course, but I like to drop in when I find time, just to supervise the distribution of the milk for the poor babies. Well, they told me at the Commissariat that it was too late to hope for developments today, but that I should call in again tomorrow—otherwise I might have been home later still. But never mind. I somehow knew that everything would be all right and that after all you would arrive in safety. I was intending to meet the one-thirty train if you were not here yet."

"In the middle of the night? *Mais . . . !*" Maurice exclaimed. "Did you really think we could be so little considerate as to choose the night train?"

She smiled wanly and patted his arm. "But you are here, Maurice. It is all that matters, is it not? And your friend Monsieur Peter Mayne. Nothing could give me greater pleasure."

She is charming, and probably a little older than she looks. She looks about fifty-five, I should say: small, dressed in strange pieces of clothing, with clasps, and the skin round her eyes has a dark-

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greyness about it, almost as if it was intentional. Her hair is turning dark-greyish too, but it is not very noticeable under the turban-thing she wears. She looks desperately tired, poor woman, but she insisted on preparing the dinner herself, despite the maid's protests. She wanted to do something special. It proved to be a triumph of tin-opening, plus fresh cream which she mixed in with a Béchamel sauce. After dinner we went into the sitting-room and listened to the gramophone. She had a romantic taste in music. I was tired—we were all tired. Soon Madame Mansarde was lying on the floor with a cushion under her shoulders. She seems unable to relax her muscles, so that her body lying on the floor there had the appearance of a cushion, a longish, hardish, cylindrical cushion, a bolster perhaps, with her head stuck firmly on as an extension to it. I sat on the floor too, after the first hour or so, because the divan is a little too high and too rounded for comfort. I remember thinking it looked like a dwarf hippo or something of the kind—hard, rounded and afloat—and my tired mind tricked me for a moment into seeing Madame Mansarde as a still smaller dwarf hippo, and not as a cushion at all.

"We were intending to go to Meknes tomorrow afternoon," Maurice was saying, in answer to her questions. Madame Mansarde's face lit with pleasure.

"But I'm going to Meknes myself on Wednesday," she cried. "You must stay here with me tomorrow night as well, the two of you, and I will motor you up to Meknes early on Wednesday morning. We shall start at four, just ahead of the sun—and we shall see him rise over this beautiful dark world of ours as we approach Rabat. Won't that be splendid? I have engagements in Meknes starting at eight on Wednesday morning."

Maurice and I exchanged nods and said yes, gratefully. It will suit us well, as a matter of fact—except, possibly, the very, very early start. Maurice wants to spend a day or so in Meknes, routing about for objects for his antique business. Then we propose to move on to Fez for a day, and thence Tangier. It is all one to me. I would like to reach Tangier by Saturday, but apart from that my time is my own.

Before going to bed Madame Mansarde made us 'an infusion of

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tea in the English manner—for Monsieur Mayne who is English,' and then she just looked into our room to make sure that we had everything we needed before she said good-night.

She is wonderfully kind, and she has a wonderful smile—though there is a sadness in it, perhaps. I think she is a woman who must have suffered a good deal in her life. She is in poor health, too. She let fall during the evening that she has an *aorte galopante*. I am uncertain what this means, exactly.

Casablanca. Tuesday night.

A pleasant day, in its way. Madame Mansarde—who hasn't given herself a moment's rest from her self-appointed tasks for months and months—could make no exceptions simply because she had guests in the house, so she compromised. She took a group of Moorish orphan girls to the Atlantic beach for a picnic, and it was arranged that we should accompany the party, but at a distance. The girls are only little things, and not veiled yet, but even so Madame Mansarde considered that Muslim etiquette demanded their segregation from foreign males. Actually the beach, or in any case the part of it that she had chosen, was not at its best. To begin with there was that thin, granular, sea-mist you get sometimes over the Atlantic at this time of year. She made the little girls dance about in it and play a running-around game that involved a handkerchief. Maurice and I, keeping a safe fifty-yard distance from the other group, were spared the games, of course, but Madame Mansarde herself had to play. Maurice shouted out to her that it would be bad for her galloping aorta but she felt very strongly that one of us must play, just to show that we were enjoying the outing too. When the wind started and cleared the mists away, we were driven to shelter under two handy but separated clumps of scrub, and it was there that we ate the picnic food, Madame Mansarde darting between the clumps with sandwiches. Some of the little girls seemed to be crying most of the time. "Poor little cabbages," Madame Mansarde said. "They are all orphans, you see."

In the evening a young man came to dinner. He was described as excessively poor and as 'going to bed supperless as a rule.' He was rather dull, and he didn't seem hungry. Hungry or no, he

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scarcely ate anything and resisted Madame Mansarde's attempts to force him. Almost immediately after dinner he said, without much grace, that he must go home again. Madame Mansarde said she would drive him back to the town—which was kind of her, because she was obviously tired out. So I offered to drive him back, if she would trust me with her car, but she said no, she must do it herself, and suggested that we all go together, perhaps making a little detour by way of the beach to see the moon and so on. Maurice said he was going to bed. I agreed to accompany the others.

"What time are we starting in the morning?" Maurice asked her, as we were leaving.

"Oh! Didn't I tell you?" she said. She was suddenly rather upset. It appears that we can't go tomorrow morning after all, because the child of some neighbour is sick, and its mother is unable to look after it. It isn't that the woman does not care, but she is a working woman, and a widow at that, and she can ill afford to lose a day's pay by remaining at home with her sick child. The child is a daughter, about nine years old. We can start for Meknes tomorrow evening, instead of in the morning. The child's mother is pathetically grateful.

"In any case I prefer to drive through the night, don't you?" Madame Mansarde commented—and we said yes: at least I think we said yes. "In that way no working-hours are lost. I have to get on to Fez from Meknes the next day, Thursday, but it is only fifty kilometres, after all. And then back from Fez to Meknes in time to slip up to Azrou and back once more to Meknes by noon."

I made a rapid mental calculation of distances, so far as I could remember them—50 plus 50 plus 70 plus 70, which made 240—two hundred and forty kilometres between dawn and mid-day: well, it was possible, but it didn't leave much time for errands of mercy.

"I suppose you can just manage it," I said.

She looked at me quizzically. "One can only do one's best. I shall start at four in the morning."

Madame Mansarde and the un-hungry young man and I went off, leaving Maurice behind. We did the detour by the beach, glanced at the moon as it was slipping over the horizon, and we finally deposited the young man in the Place de L'Horloge, right in the heart

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of the town. He lives in a little mean street nearby, I was told. He said good-night gruffly. As he walked away Madame Mansarde said to me :

"He is too full to speak."

"But he scarcely ate any . . ."

"Gratitude," she explained.

It was only ten o'clock and I told her that I would stay on in the town and sit drinking a coffee somewhere. To be quite honest I wanted to be alone for a bit. However nice my companions I like to spend a good deal of time by myself, and I hadn't been alone for two days. Late-evening café-life in Casablanca is not always very elegant, and I therefore did not suggest that Madame Mansarde join me—for this and for the other reasons. I got the impression that she was dismayed when I said that I would find my own way home.

"But how?" she asked in a flattish voice. "How?"

"By bus. Or by cab, if I am too late for the last bus."

"So late as that . . .? We must bear in mind the difficulty about the key. I have only one, my own, and . . ."

I thought rapidly and said : "I'm sorry to be such a nuisance, but could you not leave the back door open for me, perhaps?"

It was selfish to think only of myself, I know, but I felt a profound need to be alone for a little, and Madame Mansarde who regularly made night journeys alone across the Moroccan countryside was surely not a woman to be nervous of leaving her house unbolted for an hour or two. After all, Maurice was in the house with her, too. It was her turn to think rapidly. She did so and said :

"Well, if you really insist on staying here in the town, I will take the risk for once and leave the front door open. The *front* door. We don't want to have the poor servant disturbed by your coming in through the back at all hours, you see. We must remember that servants are also human beings, I think."

We parted with an exchange of little electric smiles, and I went to sit in a café and in due course reached home to find that the front door was locked. I didn't want to ring the bell, so I tried to waken Maurice by throwing handfuls of gravel at our window, but he does not wake easily. So finally I tiptoed round to the back. The servant

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has a hut, a sort of out-house, immediately beside the back door. There was nothing for it but to wake her. She replied from inside her hut that the back door was open.

"It is always open," she said. "Just push it and you will see. It has no lock, but only a bolt inside. Madame sleeps late in the mornings and she does not like to come down to let me in, so we leave the back door open always."

I crept upstairs, but Madame Mansarde heard me and called out softly from her room:

"Sh-h . . . We must try not to waken poor Maurice."

"You ought to have been asleep long ago," I whispered back, mock-seriously.

"I could not sleep till I knew that you were safely back here," she said, and I was suddenly conscious of having distressed her. I said something penitent—really feeling penitent about the whole silly incident. I hadn't realised. I think she had been genuinely anxious for me.

Casablanca. Wednesday night.

Maurice and I went to the beach by ourselves today because Madame Mansarde was to be busy with the neighbour's sick child and with her other occupations. When we came back in the latish afternoon we found her in a nervous state because the sick child had been snatched away somewhere while she was at the Goutte de Lait or somewhere else. She was much disturbed in mind, she said, wondering if it had been kidnapped. But in due course the negress maid discovered what had happened and where the child had been taken. It was said to be with its mother at a friend's house in a distant suburb on the far side of the town. The address given was imprecise, of course, but Madame Mansarde now felt compelled to go and search for it, just to make sure that everything was all right. She was rather annoyed with the child's mother for having taken it away in this secretive and astonishing manner.

"So it means, I fear, that I must leave you to dine alone," she told us. "I'm very, very sorry. I had so much looked forward to a pleasant, restful evening of talk and music. Ah me, it is a great solace to me after a long day, but . . . Ah well . . ."

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It was by now shortly after eight. Obviously Madame Mansarde could not hope to be back with us for some hours. So I said :

"Don't worry about us. We shall be all right. Do you think, by the way, that this may mean a change of plan? Shall we be starting for Meknes this evening after all?"

"I cannot possibly leave till I have straightened things out, can I?" She sighed.

"It has no importance," Maurice said, and then corrected himself. "I mean it is all one whether we start tonight or tomorrow morning. Peter and I will dine in the town, perhaps. Will you drop us at the Place de L'Horloge if you are passing that way?"

Apparently Madame Mansarde did not hear this question because she was now saying : "It won't take me a moment to prepare your supper for you. It's only a question of opening a few tins. I'll put everything to heat and give you instructions about how long, and then you can turn off the gas and serve yourselves. We can do without the maid this evening, I think. She had a disturbed night, you know." She gave me a quick look and then said : "I wish I could be here with you myself."

"But we'd *like* to go into the town, since you can't be with us here yourself," I said.

"What *can* you want to go into the town for?" she demanded, her voice broken by fatigue.

"I like it," I said.

"It's horrible, horrible . . ."

It is, of course, quite horrible. There is a shrill, adhesive greyness in the air, like mica, and the people are all levelled up or levelled down (according to where they started from) to the same horrid standard—breast-pockets with zip-fasteners for the men, and nylons with elaborately-embroidered heels for the girls. I looked at Maurice.

"Yes, Peter and I will dine in the town," he said. He is really much more ruthless than I am, but he is unaware of it, and this gives him strength.

Madame Mansarde had been thinking again. She said : "If I go at once—and I must go at once !—I will be back with you within the hour. You can count on it. We will start for Meknes in the cool of the night."

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"And where will you have your supper, Madame Mansarde?"

"I? I?" She laughed softly. "I don't need anything. I'm just an old woman. And I must be in Meknes tomorrow morning. I've given so many appointments. I cannot break them. People rely on me. In many cases I'm all they've got." She was standing by the door as she said this, and her hand was on her breast. Just as I was about to remind her (unkindly, I fear) that her Meknes appointments had been made for today and not for tomorrow, she gave a little shiver, clutched at her breast more fiercely, swept her other hand over her brow, shook herself as if dispelling pain, and said: "That's settled then. Have your supper here quietly. Everything is ready. And wait for me."

She was gone before either of us could speak.

She has gone. In her anxiety about the neighbour's sick child she has forgotten to get out the things she wants us to eat, and we do not like to scabble about in her store-cupboard for food ourselves. She has gone, but Maurice and I are here, silently, despairingly. Our bags are packed. It seems as if they have been packed for weeks.

Meknes. Thursday night.

Well, we are in Meknes now. We did not get away from Casablanca at midnight, or at three a.m., or at four a.m., or indeed at any of the tragic hours that were successively proposed, accepted and passed by. We didn't get away during the morning, either, nor during the afternoon, unless you consider that sundown can still be accounted afternoon. I thought of it tonight as the dying of today. Something had gone wrong. It had to do with the neighbour's sick child. Madame Mansarde spent most of the day in angry argument. She has all but lost faith in humankind because of the behaviour of that child's mother—that unnatural mother. Yet, I suppose, some good has come of the delay. The car-tools have been recovered—though not by the police. They seem to have been in Madame Mansarde's garage all this time. When we set off the sun was going down and the air was like warm wet fishes on the skin. I was sullen.

"*Voyons, Peter!*" Maurice whispered. "What does it matter?"

"It matters nothing," I admitted.

Madame Mansarde drives slowly, which I always think is the next

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best thing to driving well. She has a very old car, dating from a time when it was smart for the bodywork to rise like a covered bathtub all about the occupants. She lies almost flat under the long, raked steering-column, and is able to see some part of the road ahead through the spokes of the steering-wheel. On a stretch between cork forests only dimly lit by our head-lights she warned us of bandits, though she said she had no fear of them herself. When questioned she admitted that after all bandits are unlikely in this country, though this stretch of road would be propitious for them if there were any. Further on she warned us of the places where she was accustomed to having breakdowns. "I know the road like the back of my hand," she said. "Every little bend in it. Here ! No. A hundred metres ahead . . . yes, here perhaps . . . No. Here !" and finally she was not sure because one has so many breakdowns. But we had none tonight. And in due course we reached Meknes.

"And now for a little meal !" she cried, drawing up outside a café. It was a respectable little café with flower-pots and ladies with hats sipping their after-dinner coffee. It was just after ten o'clock. She ordered coffee and sweet cakes, saying : "You are my guests, I insist upon it."

We sat in the café, 'resting,' for quite a while, and argued disconsolately about whether we should stop the night in Meknes or go on to Fez, about an hour's journey away. Madame Mansarde has the use of an apartment in Fez, she says. I hadn't realised that any question of going on to Fez tonight arose, as a matter of fact. I had understood that Madame Mansarde had had engagements in Meknes yesterday which she planned to keep tomorrow at dawn and, although I did not put it quite like this, something of what I had in mind seems to have transmitted itself to her.

"We'll go on to Fez," she said, picking about in her bag and producing a key. "But first we'll just run round to Madame Durand's little house to see that all is in order and that they have fixed the branchment of the drains. I promised her faithfully that I would see to this." She turned to Maurice. "You would like to see Madame Durand's little house, Maurice ?"

Maurice, who can never resist seeing houses, traitorously said yes. I said : "Madame Mansarde, you are tired out. Let us go and

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see Madame Durand's house tomorrow. Let us telephone for rooms at some hotel *now*, and get settled in. You had no sleep last night, and you ought to go to bed, or we shall have you falling ill."

Half of my mind meant this: the other half meant that if she would go to bed *now*, I could escape and have a little sit in the cool solitude of the night before all the cafés closed—and Maurice could come with me if he wanted to.

"If you wish to go gallivanting about the streets without me, you have only to say so, and I will leave you to your devices," she replied, with remarkable perspicuity. I was rather stunned by it. I said quickly:

"Good heavens, I didn't mean that! I thought you looked tired. You *do* look tired after that long drive."

"I could drive three hundred kilometres further if necessary."

"So could I, if it were necessary. But is it, Madame Mansarde?"

"Fez is only fifty," she said.

With a sweet but exhausted glance for Maurice, and a stretching out of her hand just to touch his shoulder as she rose, she left the table. In a minute she was back again, saying: "I have telephoned and I have managed to get rooms at a hotel for all three of us. Fortunately I have a little influence. Monsieur Mayne looks as if he will not be able to support much more tonight."

When I get my way I never bear any malice towards those who have tried to prevent me from getting it, so I was quite contented now and said:

"That's wonderful. I must say that you're a wonder, Madame."

She seemed to be feeling warmly towards me, too. It was my knee that she now touched lightly with her finger-tips, and to me that she said with a fainting sweetness: "One does what one can for one's friends."

We got into the car and it was not for a minute or two that I realised how she had tricked me. She didn't drive to the hotel at all, but to Madame Durand's little house in the medina of Meknes—a dear little house with bijou appointments and bidets and a new branchment for the drains, and pretty wrought-iron grilles made of wire quite thin so that it could easily be twisted into S-patterns. It was painted pink mostly, as far as we could see, for there was no light, and the

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moon had gone, and we had nothing but waxed-paper matches which burnt our fingers. Madame Mansarde is a very conscientious woman. She made us inspect every square inch of that little house, in pitchy darkness, before she felt she could report to Madame Durand that all was well with it.

Her duty done, she drove us to the hotel. On the way I could see and hear the café-shutters come clattering down, blotting out the yawns of the patrons.

"Oh, Peter—I may call you Peter, may I not? You are too late. All the cafés are closing. We will go straight to our rooms and have a good night's rest. I have much to do in the morning."

She too bears no malice when she gets her way, evidently.

Meknes. Friday night.

Now that Madame Mansarde is no longer with us and I have had time to think things over quietly, I realise that I have been malicious. I therefore propose to cancel the whole of the Thursday entry.

The fact is that Madame Mansarde is immensely kind—overwhelmingly, and without hope of reward in this world. It is simply that I am unaccustomed to her sort of welfare-state kindness. I prefer to do for myself—or not-do for myself—the things she yearns to do for humanity. I had time to consider this during the morning, much helped by Maurice who can detach himself from the life around him, however encumbering, no doubt because he is Chinese. We had been sitting for an hour or so on the terrace of a Moorish café in the medina, waiting for Madame Mansarde. It was close upon eleven-thirty, I dare say. The idea seemed to be to meet her here in order to say *au revoir* to each other till her return from Azrou. Her programme had been changed a little since last night. Her car stood patiently by the kerb and she had gone to one or other of the engagements she had made. Her faith in humanity, though shaken by that unnatural mother in Casablanca, is such that she keeps engagements on the wrong day without any sense of 'doubt.' The difference between Madame Mansarde and the Moors in this matter is that whereas Moors are nearly always on time for their appointments (assuming that Fate permits them to keep an appointment at all), Madame Mansarde never, never fails to keep her appointments—in

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the very teeth of Fate, she will keep them—but she can never hope to be on time because of *coups-de-téléphone*, sudden calls to succour and the various dramas to which her life is subject. I was becoming hungry now. I had had no more than a cake for dinner the night before, and an old croissant for breakfast. I told Maurice that I would go and buy food for a picnic lunch and that we would eat it in the gardens that suspend themselves below the city of Meknes—as soon as Madame Mansarde had come and gone. So off I went, leaving Maurice to hold the fort. When I got back Madame Mansarde was already there, tapping her foot.

"Here you are at last!" she cried—though in quite a pleasant voice. "I've just time to say *au revoir*. I'm leaving for Azrou. I simply don't know what to arrange for you and Maurice. Now, will you be all right here, alone? You see, the car is full. There's a woman and three crippled children I have to take up and arrange for. But I shall be back by—let me see. If I start from Azrou tomorrow morning at about five—no, at four-thirty, say—I can be here by six. Will you be ready to set off at six a.m.? For Fez. Or shall we make it five? Five would be safer, perhaps—and in all ways preferable, because there is an old thing in a village half-way to Fez to whom I have sent a message to wait for me on the road-side at six. I hope to be able to comfort her a little. She has a *phthisie ambulante*, poor soul."

Maurice said: "I shan't be ready to start for Fez till the day after tomorrow. Perhaps you had better count me out."

She looked at him in a strange way for a moment. Then: "I will call for you at five in the morning. So that's all agreed now! And Peter? How will you manage all day? Maurice has his 'art,' but you aren't interested in antiques, after all."

"I am going into the gardens to eat a picnic lunch and I shall sleep under a tree."

Since Madame Mansarde left the day has been wonderful, like a spring of blessed water. Under that tree I lay from noon to six o'clock, doing nothing, and Maurice has done nothing either. It was a hibiscus, among the branches of which a bougainvillea had twined its suckers, and someone brought us mint tea and a bit of matting to lie on. In the evening we fed in a nice little hotel and had a

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conversation with an Algerian who was kindly supporting a Spaniard. The Spaniard, who was elderly and disastrously drunk, kept on begging the Algerian to escort him home, and it was explained to us that if the Spaniard is not accompanied by a Muslim when he is in this condition, the little Moorish boys of the *quartier* he inhabits play tricks and stone him. The Algerian did not wish to go home yet, and while the elderly Spaniard tugged at him and struck at him he showed us the five tattoo-marks he had on the egg-shaped muscle between his thumb and index-finger and explained that they were prison-marks—one for each confinement. There was a dog chained to a palm-pot in the patio. It tried to bite the clients as they passed to and fro, but its chain was too short. It was a charming evening.

Postscript.—Madame Mansarde came back six hours ahead of programme from Azrou and she has taken us away with her to Fez. In vain did we plead for the old person who will be waiting hopelessly at six a.m. by the roadside for the comfort that Madame Mansarde had promised her. We are in Fez now, and it is well after midnight, though I shall allow the journal entry to stand—*Meknes. Friday night.* After all, it was written there, except for this little postscript. We are established in a house belonging to some friend of Madame Mansarde's. The friend's name is, apparently, Madame Frénésie—but it can't be true! If it is true, it will be the only nice thing that has befallen me since Monday. Perhaps it is Franczy, or something like that. I am too despondent to consider the matter further tonight. Tomorrow will be—no, today *is*—another day. We might just as well be in Birmingham as Fez, or Meknes or Casablanca. This is the most horrible day of displacement that I have ever suffered. I have not destroyed the Thursday entry in my diary, after all, because I am reserving judgement.

Fez. Sunday morning.

When I looked at the little postscript for Friday night, I laughed bitterly. 'Most horrible,' my foot. Yesterday, Saturday, was the most horrible and that was still ahead of us. It is behind us now. And yet what happened? Nothing happened at all, but specialists in horror will support me if I say that the voids are often worse than

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the moments filled with agonies that the mind can clutch at like anchors.

We spent the day being kind to each other, Madame Mansarde, Maurice and I, and all three of us jointly being kind to the various defenceless very old or very young or very poor Moors over whom she has established dominion. In the evening she said that there was a penniless European living just near where we happened to be passing and that it would be wonderful to take a little supper to him so that we could all eat it together without his seeming to be the recipient of charity.

"He is very proud," she said. "And secretive. I suspect that he has a Moorish mistress. We must all do our best to make him feel at home."

She knocked at his hovel door, but there was no answer.

"He is out," she said, "unless perhaps . . ." and she started knocking again, more briskly.

I felt instinctively that he was in, cowering behind that door, and that I must save him somehow, so I said :

"He is out, and I have had an idea. I will provide the supper tonight, and the three of us will eat it in the house. No, I insist, I won't listen to any objections. You have done everything for us up to now, Madame Mansarde, and I demand the right to my turn. I shall leave you and get the food, and you can come back to the house in an hour."

I nearly failed because I had forgotten that I would have to borrow Madame Mansarde's key. She handed it over reluctantly. I bought tunny fish, butter, cheese and some peaches—all in tins—grapes and some bread. When I got back to the house I could not find a tin-opener. I looked everywhere. Not finding a tin-opener certainly took some of the edge off my kindness. I had to wait for the others to come home.

"There is no tin-opener," Madame Mansarde said, blandly.

It was a triumph for her, of course. The best triumphs in this world are always as simple as this. She followed it up with a coup de grâce :

"Since you wish us to feed in the house, Peter," she said, "I will go out and buy some cooked meats—no, no, you have no idea

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where to find such a thing in Fez at this hour. Give me my key, please."

I gave it and she was gone.

Maurice and I did not speak much during that longish wait, there in the crumbling old house round which the darkness had now fallen. Our minds were closed to everything by now—even to the almost inaudibly distant knock-knocking that impinged itself on our consciousness only after it had continued for quite a while.

"It's the front door," Maurice said.

I went down, opened it and was astonished to find Madame Mansarde collapsed on the door-step. She was clutching a handful of sharp instruments.

"I am not well," she managed to say, "and I fear that you have damaged the lock. I am sorry to have given you the trouble to come down to the door. I have been trying, trying, for a long time. And then I started knocking, but you could not hear me."

I was trying the key in the lock myself now, but it wouldn't turn.

"Do you mind helping me upstairs, please?"

She handed me a dozen skewers. The liver and bits of fatty meat spiked on to them were cold as death.

We got her to bed somehow. We were both a little alarmed—but after a while our hunger became keener than our compassion—we did not seem to have eaten anything at all solid for days—so we gave her a sick-room smile, turned off the light and went next door to our room.

"I shall be all right," she murmured as we left. "Please eat your supper while it's still hot."

We were picking in a desultory sort of way at the skewered meat when her voice came through the door to us, very weak now.

"I shall try not to disturb you with my early start. I must be on the road at four."

"Now, don't start worrying about us," Maurice said.

There was silence for a moment, and then the voice started again.

"If you hear noises in the night, it is probably only the little mice. We have no rats—except the big ones that come in through the toilet window. Oh yes—the rats. Please don't forget to bolt the toilet door from the outside. The catch does not work well and the door

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swings open, and then the rats come in. They come up the Judas tree. I fear that Madame Frénésie [I still cannot be sure of the name. P. M.] does not keep the downstairs as spotless as she should."

"We won't forget," Maurice said, and we put the skewers aside, moving on to the grapes. After a little we heard a rustling and there was Madame Mansarde in a greyish house-robe, swaying in the door.

"Have a grape," Maurice suggested.

"Perhaps a grape," she said and sank down on to a cushion.

Then she talked. She talked and talked, as if this might be her last chance—of human frailty and how one must battle against it, of one's purpose in this great world of ours, of Madame F. [?] whom, incidentally, she is displeased with because of something she had found in the bathroom on a previous visit, when Madame F. had only really been given the key of the upstairs so that she might come up and water the crotons during Madame Mansarde's frequent absences.

"I think she takes advantage of the key," she remarked. "I shall take it away from her, and the crotons must just take their chance in life, like the rest of us. Key . . ."—and she suddenly remembered about the front-door lock.

"How aggravating," she said.

"The door opened without the least difficulty when I came in," I said.

"You tried the key in my presence. I can't think *how* you had managed to damage the mechanism."

"Let me try it again."

She didn't want to let me, but I insisted. She handed over the key.

I went down and tried again and it worked perfectly. So I came back and said so. "I think you must have been trying with the wrong key," I told her.

"But I *have* only the one key!"

"You only have one key of the front door, perhaps. But unless you left Madame Durand's key in the lock of her Meknes house, I imagine you may very well have her key in your bag as well as your own. Will you look and see?"

"Impossible!" she said. "Good heavens! Don't say that

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Madame Durand's key is lost now ! " In her anxiety about Madame Durand's key she had to look in her bag, and it was there, of course.

We stopped talking about keys, and Maurice said that he was going to bed. This meant that Madame Mansarde had to go to her room to bed, too.

The night was filled with the mumbling of little jaws—the jaws of termites in the wooden rafters from which powder rained lightly down upon us as we lay, trying to sleep. It was rather terrible to lie awake and consider all those mandibles, grinding ceaselessly, like the mills of God, and to hear the scuttle of mice. Or were they rats ? I suddenly remembered that I had not bolted the lavatory door and got up to do so. I found it closed, and shot the bolt across. Then I came back to our room. There was no sound from Madame Mansarde's room. Perhaps I slept for a while, I am not sure. Some time before dawn the fancy came into my head that I had unwittingly locked Madame Mansarde into the lavatory, that she had been there when I shot the bolt across but, out of delicacy, had not liked to cry out. I lay pondering on this awful possibility for a bit and then, without warning, it was daylight and I could hear Madame Mansarde stirring next door, and I knew that at least that misfortune had been spared her. I looked at my watch. It was nine o'clock.

Both Maurice and I pretended to be asleep when Madame Mansarde tiptoed into our room. Through secret eye-slots I watched her scribble a note and pin it to Maurice's pillow. As soon as we heard the front door slam behind her, we sat up.

Maurice read the note aloud to me. It read :

"Fez. Sunday, 4.30 a.m. I leave for Sefrou this instant. I will be back by midnight to take you with me to Petit Jean. I thought you looked tired, *cher* Maurice, yesterday. I beg you to pass a quiet day, resting. *Au revoir*."

"No message for me ?" I asked.

"None. I shall make tea now. Where is the tea-pot, do you suppose ?"

"Perhaps in Madame Mansarde's room." I went into her room and found the tea-pot on her bedside table. As I bent down to pick it up my eye was caught by a sudden glitter from the back. I looked

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more closely and saw that it was an object half-hidden under her pillow. A tin-opener. I think it was only now that I realised how much she hated me.

I said to Maurice: "I believe there is a train to Tangier at mid-day."

"Then we shall take it."

"First I must write up my diary," I said, and I have written this.

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The Naked and the Nude

BY KENNETH CLARK

THE English language, with its elaborate generosity, distinguishes between the naked and the nude. To be naked is to be deprived of our clothes and the word implies some of the embarrassment which most of us feel in that condition.

The word nude, on the other hand, carries, in educated usage, no uncomfortable overtone. The vague image it projects into the mind is not of a huddled and defenceless body, but of a balanced, prosperous and confident body: the body re-formed. In fact the word was forced into our vocabulary by critics of the early eighteenth century in order to persuade the artless islanders that in countries where painting and sculpture were practised and valued as they should be, the naked human body was the central subject of art.

For this belief there is a quantity of evidence. In the greatest age of painting the nude inspired the greatest works; and even in periods when it ceased to be a fashionable subject it has held its position as an academic exercise and a demonstration of mastery. Velasquez, living in the prudish and corseted court of Philip IV and admirably incapable of idealisation, yet felt bound to paint the Rokeby Venus. Sir Joshua Reynolds, wholly without the gift of formal draughtsmanship, set great store by his Cymon and Iphigenia. And in our own century, when we have shaken off one by one those inheritances of Greece which were revived at the Renaissance, discarded the antique armour, forgotten the subjects of mythology and disputed the doctrine of imitation, the nude alone has survived. It may have suffered some curious transformations, but it remains our chief link with the classic disciplines. When we wish to prove to the philistine that our great revolutionaries are really respectable artists in the tradition of European painting, we point to their drawings of the nude. Picasso has often exempted it from that savage metamorphosis which he has inflicted

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on the visible world and has produced a series of nudes which might have walked unaltered off the back of a Greek mirror ; and Henry Moore, searching in stone for the ancient laws of its material and seeming to find there some of those elementary creatures of whose fossilised bones it is composed, yet gives to his constructions the same fundamental character which was invented by the sculptors of the Parthenon in the fifth century before Christ.

These comparisons suggest a short answer to the question ' what is the nude ? ' It is an art form invented by the Greeks in the fifth century, just as opera is an art form invented in seventeenth-century Italy. The conclusion is certainly too abrupt, but it has the merit of emphasising that the nude is not the subject of art, but a form of art.

It is widely supposed that the naked human body is in itself an object upon which the eye dwells with pleasure and which we are glad to see depicted. But anyone who has frequented art schools and seen the shapeless, pitiful model which the students are industriously drawing will know that this is an illusion. The body is not one of those subjects which can be made into art by direct transcription—like a tiger or a snowy landscape. Often in looking at the natural and animal world we joyfully identify ourselves with what we see and from this happy union create a work of art. This is the process which students of æsthetics call empathy, and it is at the opposite pole of creative activity to the state of mind which has produced the nude. A mass of naked figures does not move us to empathy, but to disillusion and dismay. We do not wish to imitate ; we wish to perfect. We become, in the physical sphere, like Diogenes with his lantern looking for an honest man ; and, like him, we may never be rewarded. Photographers who aspire to the nude are presumably engaged in this search, with every advantage ; and having found a model who pleases them, they are free to pose and light her in conformity with their notions of beauty ; finally they can tone down and accentuate by retouching. But, in spite of all the devices used, photographs of naked models are almost always embarrassing. From the first glance we begin to find fault with them. The transitions are illogical, the outlines faltering. We are bothered because the various parts of the body cannot be perceived as simple units and have no clear relationship to one another. In almost every detail the body is not the shape which

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art has led us to believe that it would be. And yet, of course, these figures are very much above the average and the camera renders them quite truthfully. Consciously, or unconsciously, photographers have usually recognised that in a photograph of the nude their real object is not to reproduce the naked body, but to imitate some artist's view of what the naked body should be like. Rejlander was the most philistine of the early photographers, but, perhaps without knowing it, he was a contemporary of Courbet, and with this splendid archetype somewhere in the background he produced one of the finest (as well as one of the first) photographs of the nude. He has succeeded partly because his unconscious archetype was a realist. The more ideal the model, the more unfortunate the photographs which try to imitate it—as those in the style of Ingres or Whistler prove.

Although the naked body is no more than the point of departure for a work of art, it is a pretext of great importance. In the history of art, the subjects which men have chosen as nuclei, so to say, of their sense of order, have often been in themselves *unimportant*. For hundreds of years, and over an area stretching from Ireland to China, the most vital expression of order was an imaginary animal biting its own tail. In the Middle Ages drapery took on a life of its own, the same life which had inhabited the twisting animal, and became the vital pattern of Romanesque art. In neither case had the subject any independent existence. But the human body, as a nucleus, is rich in associations, and when it is turned into art these associations are not entirely lost. For this reason it seldom achieves the concentrated æsthetic shock of animal ornament, but it can be made expressive of a far wider and more civilising experience. It is ourselves and arouses memories of all the things we wish to do with ourselves; and first of all we wish to perpetuate ourselves.

This is an aspect of the subject so obvious that I need hardly dwell on it; and yet some wise men have tried to close their eyes to it. 'If the nude,' says Professor Alexander, 'is so treated that it raises in the spectator ideas or desires appropriate to the material subject, it is false art, and bad morals.' This high-minded statement is contrary to experience. In the mixture of memories and sensations aroused by the nudes of Rubens or Renoir are many which are 'appropriate to the material subject.' And since these words of a famous philosopher

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are often quoted, it is necessary to labour the obvious and say that no nude, however abstract, should fail to arouse in the spectator some vestige of erotic feeling, even although it be only the faintest shadow—and if it does not do so, it is bad art and false morals. The desire to grasp and be united with another human body is so fundamental a part of our nature, that our judgement of what is conventionally known as 'pure form' is inevitably influenced by it; and one of the difficulties of the nude as a subject for art is that these instincts cannot lie hidden, as they do for example in our enjoyment of a piece of pottery, thereby gaining the force of sublimation, but are dragged into the foreground, where they risk upsetting the unity of responses from which a work of art derives its independent life. Even so, the amount of erotic content which a work of art can hold in solution is very high. The temple sculptures of tenth-century India are an undisguised exaltation of physical desire; yet they are great works of art because their eroticism is part of their total philosophy.

Apart from biological needs, there are other branches of human experience of which the naked body provides a vivid reminder—energy, ecstasy, pathos; and when we see the beautiful results of such embodiments, it must seem as if the nude as a means of expression is of universal and eternal value. But this we know historically to be untrue. It has been limited both in place and in time. There are naked figures in the paintings of the Far East; but only by an extension of the term can they be called nudes. In Japanese prints they are part of *ukiyo*, the passing show of life, which includes without comment certain intimate scenes usually allowed to pass unrecorded. The idea of offering the naked body for its own sake, as a serious subject of contemplation, simply did not occur to the Chinese or Japanese mind, and to this day raises a slight barrier of misunderstanding. In the Gothic North the position was fundamentally very similar. It is true that German painters in the Renaissance, finding that the naked body was a respected subject in Italy, adapted it to their needs, and in the end evolved a remarkable convention of their own. But Dürer's struggles show how artificial this creation was. His instinctive responses were curiosity and horror, and he had to draw a great many circles and other diagrams before he could brace himself to turn the unfortunate body into the nude.

Only in countries touching on the Mediterranean is the nude perfectly at home ; and even there its meaning was often forgotten. The Etruscans, owing three-quarters of their art to Greece, yet persisted in a type of tomb figure in which a half-draped man displays his capacious stomach with a complacency which would have shocked the Greeks. Hellenistic and Roman art produced statues and mosaics of professional athletes who seem satisfied with their monstrous proportions. More remarkable still, of course, is the way in which the nude, even in Italy and Greece, is limited by time. It is the fashion to speak of Byzantine art as if it were a continuation of Greek : the nude reminds us that this is one of the refined excesses of specialisation. Between the nereids of late Roman silver and the golden doors of Ghiberti the nudes in Mediterranean art are few and insignificant—a piece of modest craftsmanship like the Ravenna ivory of Apollo and Daphne, a few *objets de luxe*, like the Veroli Casket, with its strip-cartoon Olympos, and a number of Adams and Eves whose nakedness seldom shows any memory of antique motives.

Yet during a great part of that millennium, the masterpieces of Greek art had not yet been destroyed ; men were surrounded by representations of the nude more numerous and, alas, infinitely more splendid than any which have come down to us. As late as the tenth century the Cnidian Venus of Praxiteles, which had been carried to Constantinople, it is said, by Theodosius, was praised by the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus ; and either the original, or a copy, is mentioned by Robert de Clari in his account of the taking of Constantinople by the Crusaders. Moreover the body itself did not cease to be an object of interest in Byzantium : this we may deduce from the continuation of the race. And athletes performed in the circus, workmen, stripped to the waist, toiled at the building of St. Sophia. There was no want of opportunity for artists. That their patrons did not demand representations of the nude during this period may be explained by a number of reasonable-looking causes—fear of idolatry, the fashion for asceticism, or the influence of Eastern art. But in fact such answers are incomplete. The nude had ceased to be the subject of art almost a century before the official establishment of Christianity ; and during the Middle Ages there would have been ample opportunity to introduce it both into profane decoration, and

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into such sacred subjects as show the beginning and end of our existence.

Why, then, does it never appear? An illuminating answer is to be found in the notebook of the thirteenth-century architect Villard de Honnecourt. This contains many beautiful drawings of draped figures, some of them showing a high degree of skill. But when Villard draws two nude figures in what he believes to be the antique



Antique nudes by Villard de Honnecourt, c. 1230

style the result is painfully ugly. It was impossible for him to adapt the stylistic conventions of Gothic art to a subject which depended on an entirely different system of forms. There can be few more hopeless misunderstandings in art than his attempt to render that refined abstraction, the antique torso, in terms of Gothic loops and pot hooks. Moreover, Villard has unconsciously constructed his figures according to the pointed geometrical scheme of which he himself gives us the key on another page. Cenino Cennini, the last chronicler of medieval

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practice, says 'I will not tell you about irrational animals, because I have never learned any of their measurements. Draw them from nature, and in this respect, you will achieve a good style.' The Gothic artists could draw animals because this involved no intervening abstraction. But they could not draw the nude because it was an idea: an idea which their philosophy of form could not assimilate.

I said just now that, in our Diogenes search for physical beauty, our instinctive desire is not to imitate but to perfect. This is part of our Greek inheritance, and it was formulated by Aristotle with his usual deceptive simplicity. 'Art,' he says, 'completes what nature cannot bring to a finish. The artist gives us knowledge of nature's unrealised ends.' A great many assumptions underlie this statement, the chief of which is that everything has an ideal form of which the phenomena of experience are more or less corrupted replicas. This beautiful fancy has teased the minds of philosophers and writers on æsthetics for over two thousand years, and although we need not plunge into a sea of speculation, we cannot discuss the nude without considering its practical application, because every time we criticise a figure, saying that a neck is too long, hips too wide or breasts too small we are admitting, in concrete terms, the existence of ideal beauty. Critical opinion has varied between two interpretations of the ideal, one unsatisfactory because it is too prosaic, the other because it is too mystical. The former begins with the belief that although no individual body is satisfactory as a whole, the artist can choose the perfect parts from a number of figures and combine them into a perfect whole. Such, we are told by Pliny, was the procedure of Zeuxis when he constructed his Venus out of the five beautiful maidens of Croton, and the advice reappears in the earliest treatise on painting of the post-antique world, Alberti's *della Pittura*. Durer went so far as to say that he had 'searched through two or three hundred.' The argument is repeated again and again for four centuries, never more charmingly than by the French seventeenth-century theorist Du Fresnoy, whom I will quote in Mason's translation,

For tho' our casual glance may sometimes meet
With charms that strike the soul and seem complete,
Yet if those charms too closely we define,
Content to copy nature line for line,

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Our end is lost. Not such the master's care,
Curious he culls the perfect from the fair ;
Judge of his art, thro' beauty's realm he flies,
Selects, combines, improves, diversifies ;
With nimble step pursues the fleeting throng,
And clasps each Venus as she glides along.

Naturally the theory was a popular one with artists : but it satisfies neither logic nor experience. Logically it simply transfers the problem from the whole to the parts and we are left asking by what ideal pattern Zeuxis accepted or rejected the arms, necks, bosoms and so forth of his five maidens. And even admitting that we do find certain individual limbs or features which, for some mysterious reason, seem to us perfectly beautiful, experience shows us that we cannot often recombine them. They are right in their setting, organically, and to abstract them is to deprive them of that rhythmic vitality on which their beauty depends.

To meet this difficulty the classic theorists of art invented what they called 'the middle form.' They based their notion on Aristotle's definition of nature, and in the stately language of Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses* it seems to carry some conviction. But what does it amount to, translated into plain speech ? Simply that the ideal is composed of the average and the habitual. It is an uninspiring proposition, and we are not surprised that Blake was provoked into replying, 'All Forms are Perfect in the Poet's Mind, but these are not Abstracted or Compounded from Nature, but are from the Imagination.' Of course he is right. Perfect beauty is infinitely rare and precious, and if it were like a mechanical toy, made up of parts of average size which could be put together at will, we should not value it as we do. But we must admit that Blake's interjection is more a believer's cry of triumph than an argument, and we must ask what meaning can be attached to it. Perhaps the question is best answered in Crocean terms. The ideal is like a myth, in which the finished form can be understood only as the end of a long process of accretion. In the beginning no doubt there is the coincidence of widely diffused desires and the personal tastes of a few individuals endowed with the gift of simplifying their visual experiences into easily comprehensible shapes. Once this fusion has taken place, the resulting image, while still in a

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plastic state, may be enriched or refined upon by succeeding generations. Or, to change the metaphor, it is like a receptacle into which more and more experience can be poured. Then, at a certain point, it is full. It sets. And, partly because it seems to be completely satisfying, partly because the mythopoeic faculty has declined, it is accepted as true. What both Reynolds and Blake meant by ideal beauty was really the diffused memory of that peculiar physical type which was developed in Greece between the years 460 and 430 B.C., and which in varying degrees of intensity and consciousness, furnished our minds with a pattern of perfection until the present century.

Once more we have returned to Greece, and it is now time to consider some peculiarities of the Greek mind which may have contributed to the formation of this indestructible image.

The most distinctive is the Greek passion for mathematics. In every branch of Hellenic thought we encounter a belief in measurable proportion which, in the last analysis, amounts to a mystical religion; and as early as Pythagoras it had been given the visible form of geometry. All art is founded on faith, and inevitably the Greek faith in harmonious numbers found expression in their painting and sculpture; but precisely how we do not know. The so-called canon of Polycletus is not recorded, and the rules of proportion which have come down to us in Pliny, Gauricus and other ancient writers are of the most elementary kind. Probably the Greek sculptors were familiar with a system as subtle and elaborate as that of their architects, but we have scarcely any indication as to what it was.

There is, however, one short and obscure statement in Vitruvius which, whatever it meant in antiquity, had a decisive influence on the Renaissance. At the beginning of the third book, in which he sets out to give the rules for sacred edifices, he suddenly announces that these buildings should have the proportions of a man. He gives some indication of correct human proportions and then throws in a statement that man's body is a model of proportion because, with arms or legs extended, it fits into those 'perfect' geometrical forms, the square and the circle. It is impossible to exaggerate what this simple-looking proposition meant to the men of the Renaissance. To them it was far more than a convenient rule: it was the foundation of a whole philosophy. Taken together with the musical scale of

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Pythagoras, it seemed to offer exactly that link between sensation and order, between an organic and a geometric basis of beauty which was (and perhaps remains) the philosopher's stone of æsthetics. Hence the many diagrams of figures standing in squares or circles which illustrate the treatises on architecture or æsthetics from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

Vitruvian man, as this figure has come to be called, appears earlier than Leonardo da Vinci, but it is in Leonardo's famous drawing in Venice that he receives his most masterly exposition; also, on the whole, the most correct, for Leonardo makes only two slight deviations from Vitruvius, whereas most of the other illustrations follow him very sketchily. It is not one of Leonardo's most attractive drawings, and we must admit that the Vitruvian formula does not provide any guarantee of a pleasant-looking body. The most carefully worked out illustration of all, in the *Como Vitruvius* of 1521, shows an ungraceful figure with head too small and legs and feet too big. Particularly troublesome was the question how the square and the circle, which were to establish the perfect form, should be related to one another. Leonardo, on no authority that I can discover, said that in order to fit into a circle the figure should stretch apart his legs so that he was a fourteenth shorter than if they were together. But this arbitrary solution did not please Cesarino, the editor of the *Como Vitruvius*, who inscribed the square in the circle, with unfortunate results. We see that from the point of view of strict geometry a gorilla might prove to be more satisfactory than a man.

How little systematic proportion alone can be relied on to produce physical beauty is shown by Durer's engraving known as the *Nemesis* or *Large Fortune*. It was executed in 1501, and we know that in the preceding year Durer had been reading Vitruvius. In this figure he had applied Vitruvian principles of measurement down to the last detail: according to Professor Panofsky even the big toe is operative. He has also taken his subject from a work by the same humanist poet who inspired Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* and Raphael's *Galatea*, Poliziano. But in spite of these precautions he has not achieved the classical ideal. That he did so later was due to the practice of relating his system to antique figures. It was not his squares and circles which enabled him to master classical proportions, but the fact that he applied

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them to memories of the Apollo Belvedere and the Medici Venus—forms ‘perfected in the poet’s mind.’ And it was from these, in the end, that he derived the nude figure of Adam in his engraving of the Fall.

Francis Bacon, as we all know, said, ‘There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion. A man cannot tell whether Apelles or Albert Durer were the more trifler; whereof the one would make a personage by geometrical proportions: the other by taking the best part out of divers faces to make one excellent.’ This very intelligent observation is unfair on Durer, and suggests that Bacon, like the rest of us, had not read his book on human proportions, only looked at the plates. For, after 1507, Durer abandoned the idea of imposing a geometrical scheme on the body, and set about deducing ideal measurements from nature, with a result, as may be imagined, somewhat different from his analyses of the antique; and in his introduction he forcefully denies the claim that he is providing a standard of absolute perfection. ‘There lives no man upon earth,’ he says, ‘who can give a final judgement upon what the most beautiful shape of a man may be; God only knows that . . . “Good” and “better” in respect of beauty are not easy to discern, for it would be quite possible to make two different figures, neither conforming with the other, one stouter, the other thinner, and yet we might scarce be able to judge which of the two excelled in beauty.’

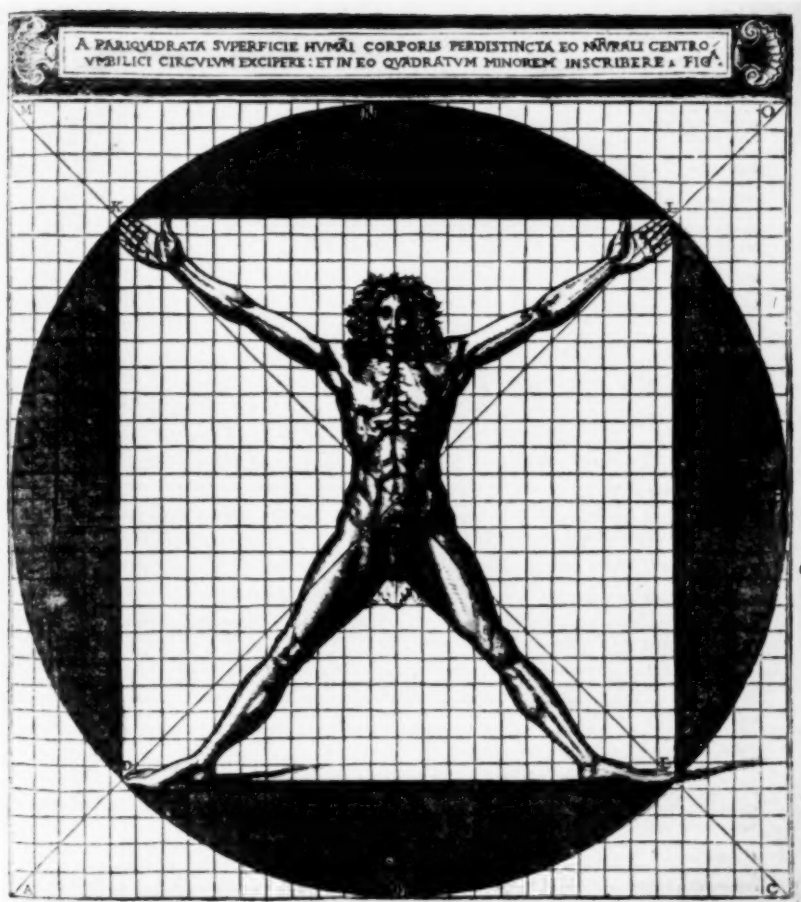
So the most indefatigable and masterly constructor of ideal proportions abandoned them half-way through his career, and his work, from the *Nemesis* onwards, is a proof that the idea of the nude does not depend on analysable proportions alone. And yet when we look at the splendidly schematised bodies of Greek sculpture, we cannot resist the conviction that some system did exist. Almost every artist or writer on art who has thought seriously about the nude has concluded that it must have some basis of construction which can be stated in terms of measurement; and I myself, when trying to explain why a photograph did not satisfy me, have just said that I missed the sense of simple units, clearly related to one another. Although the artist cannot construct a beautiful nude by mathematical rules, any more than the musician can compose a beautiful fugue, he cannot ignore

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them. They must be lodged somewhere at the back of his mind or in the movements of his fingers. Ultimately he is as dependent on them as an architect.

Dipendenza: that is the word used by Michelangelo, supreme as a draughtsman of the nude and as an architect, to express his sense of the relationship between these two forms of order. Like a building, the nude represents a balance between an ideal scheme and functional necessities. The figure artist cannot forget the components of the human body, any more than the architect can fail to support his roof or forget his doors and windows. But the variations of shape and disposition are surprisingly wide. The most striking instance is, of course, the change in proportion between the Greek and the Gothic idea of the female body. One of the few classical canons of proportion of which we can be certain is that which, in a female nude, took the same unit of measurement for the distance between the breasts, the distance from the lower breast to the navel, and again from the navel to the division of the legs. This scheme we shall find carefully maintained in all figures of the classical epoch and in most of those which imitated them down to the first century.

Compare the Cnidian Venus of Praxiteles with a typical Gothic nude of the fifteenth century, Memlinc's Eve from Vienna. The components are—naturally—the same. The basic pattern of the female body is still an oval, surmounted by two spheres; but the oval has grown incredibly long, the spheres distressingly small. If we apply our unit of measurement, the distance between the breasts, we find that the navel is exactly twice as far down the body as it is in the classic scheme. This increased length of body is made more noticeable because it is unbroken by any suggestion of ribs or muscles. The forms are not conceived as individual blocks, but seem to have been drawn out of one another as if they were made of some viscous material. It is usual to speak of this kind of Gothic nude as 'naturalistic,' but is Memlinc's Eve really closer to the average (for this is what the word means) than the antique nude? Such, at all events, was certainly not the painter's intention. He aimed at producing a figure which should conform to the ideals of his time, which should be the kind of shape which men liked to see; and by some strange inter-action of flesh and spirit this long curve of the stomach has become



VITRUVIAN MAN
From the Como Vitruvius 1521



GREEK MIRROR
Aphrodite and Eros. Louvre



NEMESIS. Dürer



THE THREE GRACES. Rubens
Prado

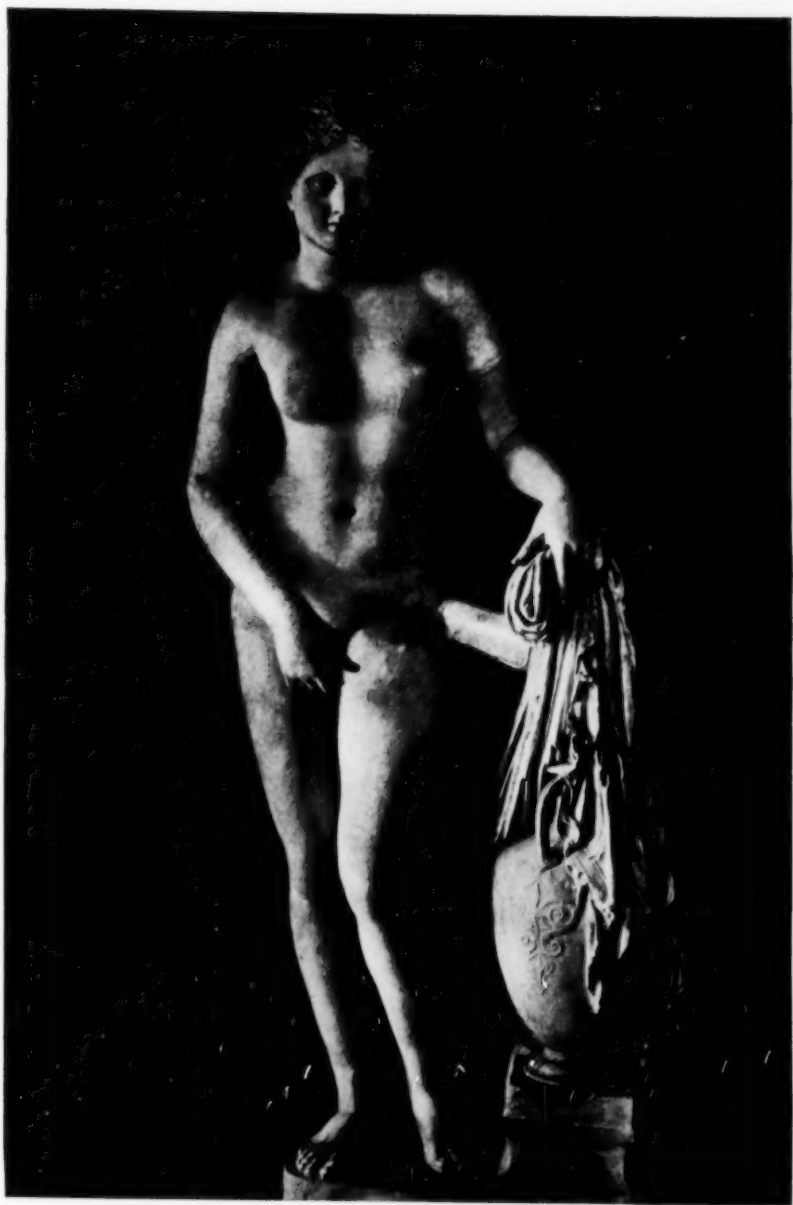


THE THREE GRACES

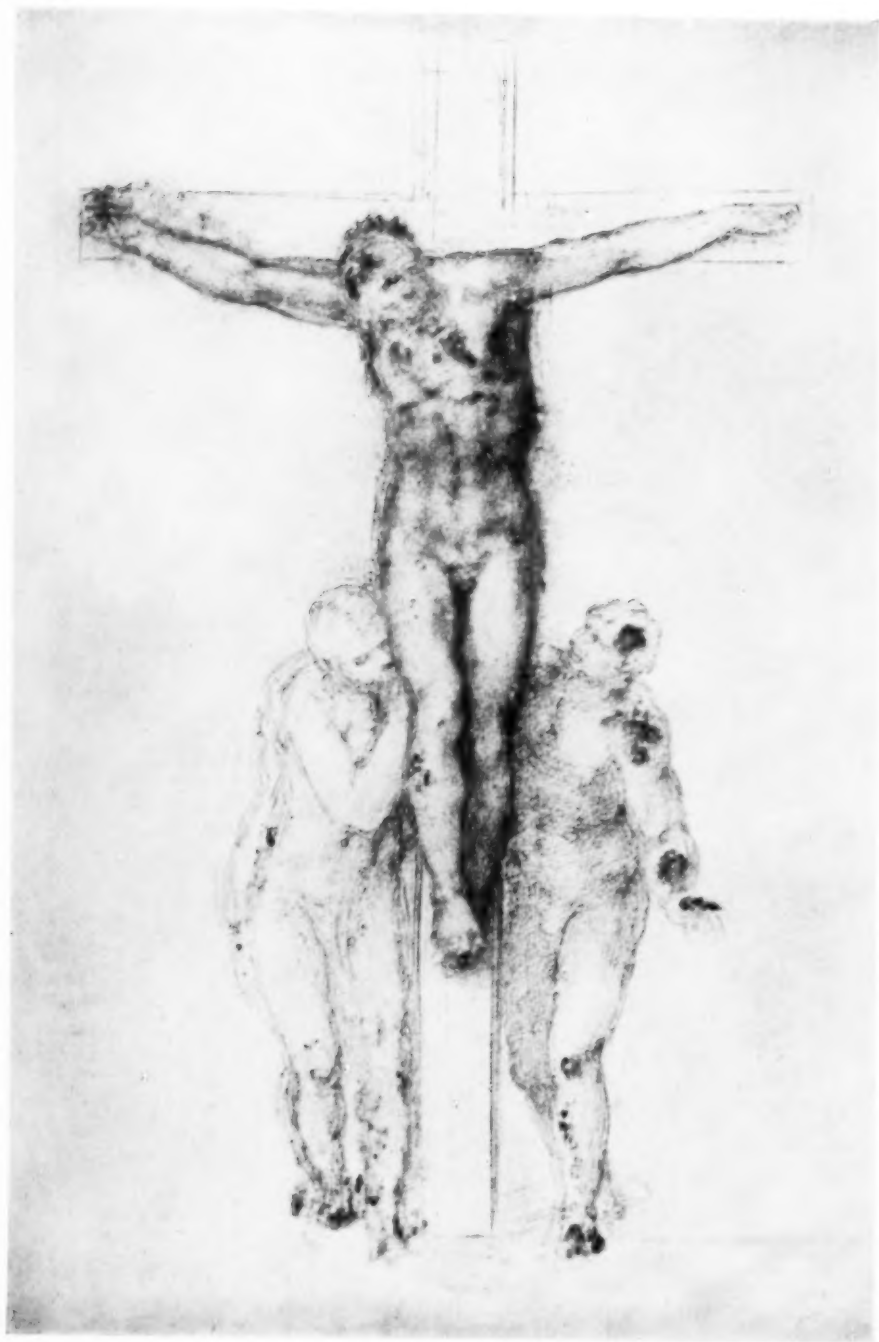
Twelfth-century MS. British Museum



EVE. Memling
Kunsthistorischen Museum, Vienna



Replica of THE CNIDIAN VENUS. Praxiteles
Vatican



CRUCIFIXION. Michelangelo
British Museum

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the means by which the ogival rhythm of late Gothic architecture has moulded the body to its purpose.

A rather less obvious example is provided by Sansovino's Apollo on the Logetta in Venice. It is inspired by the Apollo Belvedere, but although Sansovino, like all his contemporaries, thought that the antique figure was of unsurpassable beauty, he has allowed himself a fundamental difference in his construction of the body. We may describe this by saying that the antique male nude is like a Greek temple, the flat frame of the chest being carried on the columns of the legs; whereas the Renaissance nude is related to the architectural system which produced the central-domed church; so that instead of the sculptural interest depending on a simple, frontal plane, a number of axes radiate from one centre. Not only the elevations but, so to say, the ground plans of these figures would have an obvious relationship to their respective architectures. What we may call the multiple-axis nude continued until the classicistic revival of the eighteenth century. Then, when architects were reviving the Greek temple form, sculptors once more gave to the male body the flatness and frontality of a frame building. Ultimately the *dipendenza* of architecture and the nude expresses the relationship which we all so earnestly desire between that which is perfected by the mind and that which we love. Poussin, writing to his friend Chantelou in 1642, said 'The beautiful girls whom you will have seen in Nîmes will not, I am sure, have delighted your spirit any less than the beautiful columns of Maison Carrée; for the one is no more than an old copy of the other.' And the hero of Claudel's *Partage du Midi*, when at last he puts his arms round his beloved, utters, as the first pure expression of his bliss, the words 'O Colonne!'

So our surmise that the discovery of the nude as a form of art is connected with idealism and faith in measurable proportions, seems to be true, but it is only half the truth. What other peculiarities of the Greek mind are involved? One obvious answer is their belief that the body was something to be proud of, and should be kept in perfect trim.

We need not suppose that many Greeks looked like the Hermes of Praxiteles, but we can be sure that in fifth-century Attica a majority of the young men had the nimble, well-balanced bodies depicted on

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the early red figure vases. On a vase in the British Museum is a scene which will arouse sympathy in most of us, but to the Athenians was ridiculous and shameful—a fat youth in the gymnasium embarrassed by his ungraceful figure, and apparently protesting to a thin one, while two young men of more fortunate development throw the javelin and the discus. Greek literature from Homer and Pindar downwards contains many expressions of this physical pride, some of which strike unpleasantly on the Anglo-Saxon ear and trouble the minds of schoolmasters when they are recommending the Greek ideal of fitness. "What do I care for any man," says the young man, Critobulus, in the Symposium of Xenophon, "I am beautiful." And no doubt this arrogance was increased by the tradition that in the gymnasium and the sports-ground such young men displayed themselves totally naked.

The Greeks attached great importance to their nakedness. Thucydides, in recording the stages by which they distinguished themselves from the Barbarians, gives prominence to the date at which it became the rule in the Olympic games, and we know from vase paintings that the competitors at the pan-Athenaic festival had been naked ever since the early sixth century. Although the presence or absence of a loin cloth does not greatly affect questions of form, psychologically the Greek cult of absolute nakedness is of great importance. It implies the conquest of an inhibition which oppresses all but the most backward people; it is like a denial of original sin. This is not, as is sometimes supposed, simply a part of paganism: for the Romans were shocked by the nakedness of Greek athletes, and Ennius attacked it as a sign of decadence. Needless to say he was wide of the mark, for the most determined nudists of all were the Spartans, who scandalised even the Athenians by allowing women to compete, lightly clad, in their games. He and subsequent moralists considered the matter in purely physical terms; but in fact Greek confidence in the body can be understood only in relation to their philosophy. It expresses above all their sense of human wholeness. Nothing which related to the whole man could be isolated or evaded; and this serious awareness of how much was implied in physical beauty saved them from the two evils of sensuality and æstheticism.

At the same party where Critobulus brags about his beauty Xenophon

describes the youth Autolycus, victor of the Pancration, in whose honour the feast was being given. 'Noting the scene,' he says, 'the first idea to strike the mind is that beauty has about it something regal ; and the more so if it chance to be combined (as now in the person of Autolycus) with modesty and self-respect. Even as when a splendid object blazes forth at night, the eyes of men are riveted, so now the beauty of Autolycus drew on him the gaze of all ; nor was there one of those onlookers but was stirred to his soul's depth by him who sat there. Some fell into unwonted silence, while the gestures of the rest were equally significant.'

This feeling, that the spirit and body are one, which is the most familiar of all Greek characteristics, manifests itself in their unique gift of giving to abstract ideas a sensuous, tangible and, for the most part, human form. Their logic is conducted in the form of dialogues between real men ; their gods take visible shape, and on their appearance are usually mistaken for half-familiar human beings—a maid-servant, a shepherd or a distant cousin ; and woods, rivers, even echoes are shown in painting as bodily presences, solid as the living protagonists, and often more prominent. Here we reach what I take to be the central point of our subject : 'Greek statues,' said Blake, in his *Descriptive Catalogue*, 'are all of them representations of spiritual existences, of gods immortal, to the mortal, perishing organ of sight ; and yet they are embodied and organised in solid marble.' The bodies were there, the belief in the gods was there, the love of rational proportion was there. It was the unifying grasp of the Greek imagination which brought them together. And the nude gains its enduring value from the fact that it reconciles several contrary states. It takes the most sensual and immediately interesting object, the human body, and puts it out of reach of time and desire ; it takes the most purely rational concept of which mankind is capable, mathematical order, and makes it a delight to the senses ; and it takes the vague fears of the unknown and sweetens them by showing that the gods are like men, and may be worshipped for their life-giving beauty rather than their death-dealing powers.

To recognise how completely the value of these spiritual existences depends on their nudity, we have only to think of them as they appear, fully clothed, in the Middle Ages or early Renaissance. They have lost

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all their meaning. When the Graces are represented by three nervous ladies hiding behind a blanket, they no longer convey to us the civilising influence of beauty. When Hercules is a lumbering *landsnecht* weighed down by fashionable armour he no longer increases our sense of well-being by his own superabundant strength. Conversely, when nude figures which had been evolved to express an idea ceased to do so, and were represented for their physical perfection alone, they rapidly lost their value. This was the fatal legacy of neo-classicism, and Coleridge, who lived through the period, summed up the situation in some lines which he added to his translation of Schiller's *Piccolomini* :

The intelligible powers of ancient poets,
The fair humanities of old religion,
The Power, the Beauty and the Majesty,
That had their haunts in dale or piney mountain,
.....all these have vanished.
They live no longer in the faith of reason.

The academic nudes of the nineteenth century are lifeless because they no longer embodied real human needs and experiences. They were among the hundreds of devalued symbols which encumbered the art and architecture of the utilitarian century.

The nude had flourished most exuberantly during the first hundred years of the classical renaissance, when the new appetite for antique imagery overlapped with the medieval habits of symbolism and personification. It seemed then that there was no concept, however sublime, which could not be expressed by the naked body, and no object of use, however trivial, which would not be the better for having been given human shape. At one end of the scale was Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* ; at the other the door knockers, candelabra or even handles of knives and forks. To the first it might be objected—and frequently was—that nakedness was unbecoming in a representation of Christ and His Saints. This was the point put forward by Paul Veronese when he was tried by the Inquisition for including drunkards and Germans in his picture of the *Marriage at Cana* : to which the chief inquisitor gave his immortal reply "Do you not know that in these figures by Michel Angelo there is nothing which is not spiritual—*non vi e cosa se non de spirito*." And to the

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second it might be objected—and frequently is—that the similitude of the naked Venus is not what we need in our hand when we are cutting up our food or knocking at a door, to which Benvenuto Cellini would have replied that since the human body is the most perfect of all forms we cannot see it too often. In between these two extremes was that forest of nude figures, painted or carved, in stucco, bronze or stone, which filled every vacant space in the architecture of the sixteenth century.

Such an insatiable appetite for the nude is unlikely to recur. It arose from a fusion of beliefs, traditions and impulses very remote from our age of essence and specialisation. Yet even in the new self-governing kingdom of the æsthetic sensation, the nude is enthroned. The intensive application of great artists has made it into a sort of pattern for all formal constructions, and it is still a means of affirming the belief in ultimate perfection. 'For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make' wrote Spenser in his Hymne in Honour of Beautie, echoing the words of the Florentine neo-Platonists, and although in life the evidence for the doctrine is inconclusive, it is perfectly applicable to art. The nude remains the most complete example of the transmutation of matter into form.

Nor are we likely once more to cut ourselves off from the body, as in the ascetic experiment of medieval Christianity. We may no longer worship it, but we have come to terms with it. We are reconciled to the fact that it is our life-long companion, and since art is concerned with sensory images the scale and rhythm of the body is not easily ignored. Our continuous effort, made in defiance of the pull of gravity, to keep ourselves balanced upright on our legs affects every judgement on design, even our conception of which angle shall be called 'right.' The rhythm of our breathing and the beat of our hearts are part of the experience by which we measure a work of art. The relation of head to body determines the standard by which we assess all other proportions in nature. The disposition of areas in the torso is related to our most vivid experiences, so that abstract shapes, the square and the circle, seem to us male and female; and the old endeavour of magical mathematics to square the circle is like the symbol of physical union. The starfish diagrams of Renaissance theorists may be ridiculous, but the Vitruvian principle rules our

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spirits and it is no accident that the formalised body of the 'perfect man' became the supreme symbol of European belief. Before the Crucifixion of Michelangelo we remember that the nude is, after all, the most serious of all subjects in art ; and that it was not an advocate of Paganism who wrote 'The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.'

The Yellow Crab

BY H. E. BATES

MR. PICKERING watched the crab emerge with sinister caution from its hole in the sand for the fourth time in fifteen minutes. It was quite unlike any other crab he had ever seen.

The first time it had almost frightened him. He had not been prepared for the strange black periscope eyes that suddenly lifted themselves up on a pair of inquisitive feelers above the little yellow spider body. At one moment the hot white sand was deserted. The next the crab was there, fifteen inches away from his hand, watching him exactly as if it had trundled up at that precise spot to keep an engagement with him on the shore of the little bay.

"Did you see the sun rise?" Mrs. Pickering said and he said, "Yes, over there," pointing due north-westward at the same moment as he whispered.

"It was marvellous, quite marvellous," Mrs. Pickering said, "all orange and rose," and in a moment the crab, marching backwards, swifter than any spider, was gone again in the sand.

"Now you've frightened him away," he said.

"Frightened who?"

"He's never been really right out yet," Mr. Pickering said. "He comes so far and then he sees me. I always wondered what the little holes in the sand were and now I know. He's got eyes like shoe-buttons on the top of sticks."

"Who are you talking about——"

"Not so loud!" Mr. Pickering said. "I want him to come out again."

While he waited for another six or seven minutes, lying sideways on his face, watching the hole where the crab lay, Mrs. Pickering made herself more comfortable in a shallow burrow in the sand.

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She stretched there plumply in a white silk bathing-dress, her heavy legs and chest and shoulders a raw carmine red from the heat of sun and trade winds. Mr. Pickering was much leaner, almost scraggy, and his taut skin had a neutral leathery sallowness that would not tan.

"You ought to get your swim if you're going to," Mrs. Pickering said.

He said, "Damn," in a whisper not loud enough for Mrs. Pickering to hear. He had been perfectly sure the crab was coming up again at that moment. He felt sure he had caught the first glimpse of its sinister seedy eyes. Now it would be another five minutes, at least, before it made another try.

"I think we should get an early lunch and then take the car and do the drive to Fern Gully," Mrs. Pickering said.

She was sitting upright now, fatly squabbed, rubber-fleshed, brushing white-pink crystals of sand from her arms and calves and shoulders.

"I wish you wouldn't chatter," he said. "I want the crab to come out."

"Oh! it's a crab," she said. "Why didn't you say so? I've seen hundreds of them."

"Not like this one."

"Is it yellow like a spider with sort of knitting needles on its head and it looks at you?"

When Mr. Pickering began to say that it was and how did she know? Mrs. Pickering idly flicked shining particles of sand from her body, gazing at the parallel bars of blue and white made across the sea by the steady motion of trade-winds beyond the sheltered basin of the bay.

"I sat here all afternoon yesterday looking at them while you were over at the island. Rock Island or wherever it was. They come out when it's quiet. What were you doing there?"

Mr. Pickering too sat up.

"I've got something to show you," he said.

He put his hand into the pocket of his cream gabardine trousers and threw over to Mrs. Pickering something which fell without a sound into the powdery sand.

"Well, for heaven's sake what is it?" she said.

"I bet you never saw one of those before."

"Well, what is it?"

"Look at it," Mr. Pickering said. "Take a good look at it. I bet you never saw one before."

Mrs. Pickering gave a surprised fleshy laugh and said:

"Well, my goodness, it's some sort of dollar coin. Five!" she said. "Five dollars."

"Gold," Mr. Pickering said. "American."

"But we don't have gold——"

"And take a look at that," Mr. Pickering said. "Guess what that is."

He threw over to Mrs. Pickering once again something which fell into dazzling soft sand without a sound.

"This isn't a dollar," she said. "This has got an animal or something on it. Sort of crocodile."

"Dragon," Mr. Pickering said. "St. George killing the dragon. You know—St. George of England."

"You mean to say this is English?"

"English sovereign," he said. "Gold. Used to be worth about five dollars. Now it's worth double—treble, maybe."

With careful indifference Mr. Pickering got up and began to take his trousers off. Underneath them he was wearing loose-fitting crimson swimming trunks on the left leg of which was embroidered a picture in blue and white of a diving girl. Mr. Pickering folded the trousers neatly and then carefully walked across to his wife and laid them in the broad lap made by her pink-skinned thighs.

"Look in the pocket," he said. "Go on. Take a look in the pocket."

Across the sand, beyond a line of hurricane-twisted palms, in front of the blue-walled hotel, a coloured boy in a white jacket was serving rum-punches to a group of sun-bathers lying under a vast orange umbrella. The sun flashed on the amber glasses, the tray and the silver tongs of the ice container as the boy lifted them.

Mr. Pickering pretended to watch all this with an absorbed but casual interest. In reality he was watching his wife slowly take from the pocket of his trousers seven dollar pieces and thirteen sovereigns.

"Now you know why I came down to the beach with my trousers

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on," he said. "I didn't know where the heck to leave the things. I got a funny feeling about them—felt they were sort of contraband."

"You didn't—?"

"Oh! no," he said. "They're legitimate enough. They're still currency—only you don't see 'em any more."

"Then where on earth did you get them?"

"Bought 'em," he said.

"But where?"

"Over at the island. Yesterday." He smiled a leather-tight pursing sort of smile that brought his lips together in a thin and parsimonious line. "And if I have any luck I'll buy some more today. Maybe a hundred. Maybe two."

"You must be crazy," she said. "All your life you been making money. Now you start buying it. That's crazy."

Mr. Pickering sat down in the sand to unlace his crimson crepe-soled deck shoes. In one of them was a spoonful of white sand and he slowly and thoughtfully poured it away like salt from the heel.

"You know the house along the road?" he said. "The white one with the blue roof? The one you like so much? With the red bourgainvillea on the walls?"

"I like that house—yes."

"What say we buy it?—not now, but in a couple or three weeks. Before we go home?"

"But you know what they're asking for that house? They're asking——"

"I know what they're asking."

"Well, you know we could never find that kind of money. Where would we find that crazy money? Not in Detroit, today."

"We don't have to find it," Mr. Pickering said. "It's here."

Mr. Pickering looked over his shoulder in time to see the coloured boy in the white jacket walking towards them with drinks on a tray.

"Wait till the boy's gone," he said. "Well, there you are! how's the rum-swizzle trade?" The coloured boy smiled and bent down and Mr. Pickering took two red-golden punches from the tray. "One of the things I like about this hotel is this free drink they give you mornings."

"You pay for it," Mrs. Pickering said. "You pay in the end."

"I tell you what," he said. "I forgot my water-goggles. Boy, would you send somebody down with my water-goggles and my flippers—Room 17. Quick as you can, please."

"Yes-sir."

When the boy had gone Mr. Pickering sat sucking rum through a straw and watching the long, almost phosphorescent lines of breakers spuming on the inner reefs of the bay. They were very beautiful in their pure curling regularity, like waves of bright-brushed hair. Beyond them the sea had the blueness of vitriol, with stripes of acid green, fading to sandy yellow, where the shallows were. Beyond that the thin low rocks of an island seemed like nothing more than a blue-brown floating board except when spray hit them, and leapt like a wild white horse into clear ocean beyond.

"It's all over there," Mr. Pickering said.

"On the island? How did you find that out?"

Mr. Pickering sucked once more at the straw in his glass and then looked about him to see if anyone was coming. The boy had not come back.

"You've heard of Maxted," he said.

"But that was a long time ago. That's closed, isn't it? Everybody's forgotten about that."

"When a man's murdered nobody forgets about it. Especially the person who did the murder."

Mrs. Pickering played with sand, letting it run like iridescent mist through her podgy fingers, and said that she didn't see what the murder of the man named Maxted had to do with gold on Rock Island.

"Or for that matter with you."

"The man had an empire," he said. "A bit here, a bit there. A fortune here, one over there—God, nobody knows how much he had. This is only one bit of it."

"You're going to try to tell me he left odd fortunes lying around in gold pieces," she said. "Just for the picking up."

"You might call it funk money," he said. "You might call it insurance. Some would. Dictators do it—a cache here and a cache there. You know—against the evil day."

"The boy's coming with your goggles," she said. "You know,

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I think I'll go to the hotel. I find it very nearly too hot to sit in the sun."

"Just wait two minutes. While the boy's gone. Then I'll have my swim."

The boy brought Mr. Pickering's goggles, a pair of rubber frog-men flippers and a telephone message on a tray.

"That's all right," Mr. Pickering said. He reached for his trousers and gave the boy two English shillings. "That's fine. Thank you."

The boy went away and Mrs. Pickering said: "Who is that from?"

"Man named Torgsen," he said. "You know the funny little pink house near the harbour? Has shells and sea-fans and goddam porcupine fish hanging up outside? He keeps that. He's got a motor-boat—he's going to take me across to the island."

"This afternoon?"

"Two o'clock," he said. "He's the one who knows all about it."

"If he knows all about it why doesn't he keep it to himself? What's he have to let you in on it for?"

"Now you've hit it," Mr. Pickering said.

He was fitting on his flippers. When both of them were fixed his feet had the appearance of those of a giant green duck.

"They're all scared to hell," he said. "Everybody knows just enough to scare everybody else."

"About the murder or about the money?"

"Both," Mr. Pickering said. "When war broke out Maxted salted away about a quarter of a million in gold coinage on the island. The island belonged to him, anyway, and he had three motor-boats keeping trespassers away. That's what I mean about funk money."

Mrs. Pickering said she understood about the funk money but not about Torgsen. "Why should that old junk-store shell-collector know anything?" she said. "He looks like a soaker to me."

"He's a remarkable man," Mr. Pickering said. "Maxted made a pal of him. He liked catching out of the way fish and getting Torgsen to set them up. You soak them in formaldehyde and then they harden up in the sun. Maxted had a big collection, all done by Torgsen."

Thoughtfully Mr. Pickering began to polish the eye-pieces of his goggles.

"If the money was so hush-hush I don't see how Torgsen got to know about it, anyway," Mrs. Pickering said.

"Maxted began to pay him in gold," Mr. Pickering said. "That's how."

"I don't see how that makes sense."

"Oh! yes," he said. "That makes sense. That was the vanity part. It wasn't only that Maxted liked empires. He liked behaving like an emperor. Sometimes he'd go in to see Torgsen and if a fish wasn't ready he'd knock Torgsen down. One day he pressed his thumbs under his eyes until his eyeballs stuck out."

Mrs. Pickering began to say that she did not wonder that Maxted, making so many enemies, had been murdered at last, but Mr. Pickering said:

"Funny thing, he made friends that way too. Torgsen was a friend. Every time Maxted knocked him down or shoved his eyeballs out he'd come back next day in a terrible state—remorse and all that—and beg forgiveness and say what a brute he'd been and what could he do to show how sorry he was?"

"Torgsen was the fool."

"Oh! no," Mr. Pickering said. "I don't think so. Maxted would give him ten or twenty pounds as sort of compensation. Easy money. Then one day he kicked him in the belly and knocked him unconscious—and then next day Maxted was in a terrible way and that was when he paid him in gold."

Mrs. Pickering in a bored way got up and put her wrap on her shoulders and thrust her feet into her pink sisal-grass beach-shoes that had an embroidery of pale green and blue shells on the toes.

"It all sounds like drink to me," she said. "Anyway, I'm going up to change now. Don't be very long. You know how it is if we're not in there when the gong goes."

"He was a drunk all right," Mr. Pickering said. "But that doesn't alter the fact that Torgsen can buy dollars and sovereigns on the island. That's a fact you can't get away from."

"I'd better take your trousers, hadn't I?" she said. "I'll put the coins in my handbag. By the way, what do you give for them?"

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"They're glad to get about twenty per cent less than they're worth," he said. He laughed with brown, leathery, acquisitive lips. "Figure it out while you're dressing."

Mr. Pickering put his goggles on and flapped down to the sea like a semi-naked, balding, upright frog. For some time he swam in and among the low reefs protecting the little inner bay from the trade-winds that blew beyond the headland. The water everywhere was so clear and limpid that he could see in these sea-gardens shoals of blue and orange fish, a few inches long, and larger fish of striped pink and blue. The sea-weed, rose-violet in places, chocolate in others, sometimes bright yellow, waved everywhere about him with the gentle torment of shoals of anchored eels.

When he came out of the sea and went back to his place on the beach he lay there for some time with his face upturned to the sky. The sun was very hot and there was no sound in the air except the small folding lap of minute waves eating into smooth white sand.

"Somebody knows," Mr. Pickering told himself. "Somebody must know."

In that moment he remembered the crab; and as he turned his head he saw to his surprise and delight that it had come out again to look at him, poised on its wiry yellow legs, with its queer, ghoulis, disembodied little eyes.

"Part of it's under the sea," Mr. Pickering said, "or in the sea. I found out that much."

"You know, you came here to relax," Mrs. Pickering said. "Trying to pick a murderer is no way to recuperate after pleurisy."

"I'm not trying to pick any murderer," he said. "I'm interested in picking up a fortune."

"Just the same, one links with the other," she said. "And anyway it doesn't relax you."

"I feel great," he said. "You got to give your mind something to do, anyway, haven't you? You just can't sit the whole time." Mr. Pickering, in three weeks of Caribbean sun, watching the infinite blues of Caribbean waters, had almost forgotten the harsh and competitive world he had left in Detroit. Sometimes he took from his wallet one of the cards which Charlie Muller, his partner, and himself

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had fixed up after long deliberation and which both of them thought was pretty good. "We insure anything," it said, "and sell the world." These words and the cards on which they were printed, together with *Pickering & Muller: Brokers*, seemed no longer real when seen through the foggy distances of three weeks of time. Nor did Charlie Muller seem real; nor the high offices from which Mr. Pickering and his associate and six stenographers looked across the wintry lake and the wintry Canadian distances beyond. It was surprising, Mr. Pickering thought, how a world could slip away from you; surprising, too, how another, the world of Torgsen and Maxted's murder and Maxted's gold, could so insidiously replace it and so soon.

"Well, I got a hundred and eighty dollars' worth," he said.

"Let's sit here," Mrs. Pickering said, "and watch the sunset."

Mrs. Pickering's passion for watching sunrise and sunset brought them every evening, in the hour before dinner, to a small promontory on the eastern edge of the bay. Below, on the white beach, the long line of hurricane-stricken palms, in almost horizontal curves, took on the strange appearance of gigantic burnished scimitars in the gold-rose glow of dying light. The enormous sinking sun set the calmest of seas on fire. On top of the promontory was a wooden seat above which grew trees of incense covered with small trails of parasite orchids of pinkish mauve, uncommonly like butterflies, and the air was heavy with the drenching sweetness of the incense flowers.

"Look at the sea now," Mrs. Pickering said. "Every wave has a pink tip on it. Look at it now—isn't that heavenly? In a minute it'll be orange or yellow or something—it changes so quickly."

Mr. Pickering looked at the sea and saw in its brilliant surface, four hundred yards from shore, a long dark boat, narrow like a canoe, piled high with what seemed to be a system of wrecked hen-coops.

"There go the craw-fish boys," he said. "Setting their pots. That's another thing I have to do—spear craw-fish."

"It's all red now," Mrs. Pickering said. "Look!—it's all red like fire."

"You suppose they do catch craw-fish?" Mr. Pickering said. "Could be they didn't—you know, it could be!—" He suddenly got up from the seat, descended the small flight of steps that had been

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cut into the black rock of the promontory and went down to the edge of the sea.

Over by the thin brown reef the boat had stopped. Mr. Pickering peered across the green-red sunset waters and watched as one after another the hen-coop craw-fish pots were pitched into the sea. He could see in the boat two brown-skin boys wearing tattered grey shirts and sombre trilby hats. He could see clearly the splash of each craw-fish pot whitening the delicate surface of the sea. Then the rock of the reef itself seemed to leap up from the surrounding liquid fire with such striking solidity that Mr. Pickering was suddenly overwhelmed with the brilliance of an astounding idea.

"Look—that's it, that's it," he said. "I bet you a million to one that's how Maxted hid it. Torgsen says it's under the sea—and I bet all the tea in China that's how it got there."

A double echo of his voice, strangely contrived between rock and sea, brought back to him the sudden realisation that he was speaking to himself. He ran back up the steps. Mrs. Pickering was standing in a posture of bent rapture against the low concrete wall built round the top of the little cliff. Mr. Pickering, running in rubber-soled shoes, seized her elbow so suddenly that she gave a short cry, startled.

"Oh! you scared me. You really did—I was watching the sun just disappearing—look at it, you can see it moving. Look—it's going down."

"I just figured it out," Mr. Pickering said. "It's simple really. Obvious. Maxted liked these rare fish. He loved poking about these reefs—used to spend days at it, Torgsen says. So what does he do? he puts the stuff there—there are millions of these damn reefs and cays where you could hide stuff and nobody would ever know. Well, nobody—somebody knows. Torgsen knows."

"It gets dark so quickly," she said. "Look, there's only a tip of the sun now. It's just like a finger-nail—just like a red finger-nail. Don't you think so?"

"Ah-ah," he said. "That's beautiful. You see the craw-fish boys are going back now. Funny how they always come just at the same time."

The scarlet upper tip of sun slid with arresting swiftness below the horizon, leaving the sea smouldering with wavelets of pure orange

touched by strokes of eucalyptus green. The air fell suddenly so dead calm that the dip of the single stern oar of the craw-fish boat made a snap in the air as it flipped at the sea.

"It won't be long now before the fire-flies are out," Mrs. Pickering said. "I love it when the fire-flies begin."

Until this long southern vacation Mrs. Pickering had never seen fire-flies before, and her first sight of them in the hot sub-tropical darkness, like dancing gas-green glow-worms, had startled her almost as much as the crab had startled Mr. Pickering when he first saw it in the sand.

"And that reminds me. You know, I found out something about them," she said. "I was reading it in a magazine while you were over at the island this afternoon. Those lights they have—they're signals."

"What of?" Mr. Pickering said. "Danger?"

"No. It's like morse-code—I mean semaphore. Each of these flashes is in a sort of code—either it's one, two, one or it's two, one, one or something like that and it's a signal from the female to male."

"About what?"

"About love-mating and all that. The male flies around on his own wave-length or whatever you call it, one, two, one, until he finds a girl-friend on the same wave-length making his signal."

"Then they clinch, I suppose," Mr. Pickering said.

"I think it's the most beautiful thing," she said.

Mr. Pickering did not answer this time and his wife sat with enraptured patience looking at the sea. All its colours were dissolving and softening down to one colour—at least you thought it was one colour until you looked, as she did now, with eyes of half-closed penetration, and then you saw that it was an iridescence of fifty colours, perhaps a hundred, perhaps more, each small wave with its smeared brush-stroke of tenderest coloured light.

"You know, it's funny," Mr. Pickering said. "You mention this murder and they all start talking about the price of bananas or some damn thing. Nobody wants to talk."

"I can understand that," she said. "It's ten years ago, so why not let it rest? It's over and done with. And a good thing."

"Not on your life," Mr. Pickering said. "The murderer's here

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on this island. And don't tell me that's a good thing. They sometimes do it again, you know that."

"All right. Have you a theory?"

"Not yet," he said. "But I probably will have after I've been over to Cat Cay tomorrow. That's just a lump of reef and sand over on the other side of Rock Island. You don't see it from here. But I'll bet my office to a nickel that's where the other part of the gold is."

"Nearly dark now. Only blue and tiny bits of yellow on the water. You can feel the wind turning, can't you?"

During the day-time the wind, the trade-wind, fresh and warm and illuminating the dark blue water with bars of snow foam, came from the sea. At night it blew from the mountains.

"Didn't they try a man once for it and let him off?" Mrs. Pickering said.

"They did."

"Then don't you think they'd have tried someone else if the murderer is here on the island? After all it's so little. Just a few thousand people, that's all."

"You got it there," Mr. Pickering said. "It's little—so everybody knows everybody. Everybody knows something. Everybody knows and everybody keeps his mouth shut."

Mrs. Pickering straightened up at last from her position of enraptured patience by the concrete wall. The sea was almost dark now, pure indigo, the sky above it a soft-washed green fading, far up, to palest night blue. The colours of the parasite orchids could not be seen in the incense trees. The palms and the big striped aloes on the hotel terrace were simply blackened shadows.

"I think that's what you should do," Mrs. Pickering said. "Keep your mouth shut."

"I got a sort of feeling we came here just in time," Mr. Pickering said. "A year or two back you'd never have gotten the chance of this stuff. Plenty of money about. They were holding on. Now money's getting tight. Plenty tight. So they're unloading. It's the ground floor."

They had begun to walk down the rocky path from the high point of the promontory towards the hotel and the shore. Sea and sky were now almost joined in one dark blue mass together and the

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mountains, with their lower fringes of enormous palms, seemed to be on the point of stumbling into the sea.

"I still don't get why all these people have got these gold dollars and sovereigns to sell, anyway," Mrs. Pickering said.

"You got to pay to keep mouths shut, haven't you?" he said. "See?"

"I see."

Mr. Pickering laughed in the warm darkness. A sudden turn of wind, like the enlarged echo of his voice, woke in the brittle fronds of the hurricane-bent palms and metallic chatter that ran out towards the dark surface of the sea.

"Oh! Look!" Mrs. Pickering said. "The fire-flies. Making their signals."

Lying on the sand the following afternoon, Mrs. Pickering watched the crab continually emerge from its neat hole with the same sinister caution as before. Several times during the afternoon it ran from the hole as much as ten or fifteen inches before it became aware of her and scuttled back. There was something horribly repulsive, she thought, about the way a crab ran backwards. Nor did she feel easy about the grotesque, upraised periscope eyes that seemed almost to swivel on the little yellow head. Each time they left her with the chilling impression that the crab was really a monster that time had dwarfed.

She wished all afternoon that Mr. Pickering would come. She had something to tell Mr. Pickering. She did not know whether it was important or whether it was one of those things women just said for the sake of saying something, but she had been talking after lunch to a Mrs. Archibald, a Vermonter. She had always understood that Vermonters were queer birds—somebody had once told her that Vermonters had all the eggs and butter and cream that they wanted during war-time simply because the idea of rationing was something no Vermonter could possibly stomach, and she thought that was disgraceful and this Mrs. Archibald was the type that buttonholed you in corners and kept you there whether you liked it or not.

It was about the Maxted murder that Mrs. Archibald had spoken. She and her husband had been on the island three years before and

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on that occasion there was a young woman from Chicago or St. Paul or somewhere who was investigating the case—not officially, Mrs. Archibald said, just poking her nose in.

"And her they found wrapped up on the sea-shore," Mrs. Archibald said. "In a sack."

As she heard this Mrs. Pickering felt a stab of coldness drive through the centre of her spine. She guessed it was really that same feeling, uneasy and nervous and chilling, that she re-experienced every time the crab ran backwards towards its hole.

By five o'clock she had begun to be uneasy too about Mr. Pickering; she was certain he ought to be back. She was uneasy also about being alone on the deserted shore. Most people seemed to lie on their beds in the afternoon and for nearly three hours there had been no one on the sand but herself and the crab.

Then soon after five o'clock she saw that in the quietness two herons, a young one and its mother, had come to fish along the shaken edge of sea. They were so delicate and pretty: so graceful, so unlike the crab. The mother had a dark dove-coloured sheen on her feathers and her legs were blue. The young bird had feathers of bottle green and its smaller body seemed cast on the water like the shadow of the larger bird.

The sight of the birds, so delicate and undisturbed, calmed all of her feelings about Mrs. Archibald, the crab and the young woman who had been found in a sack: so that when Mr. Pickering at last appeared she had nothing to say but:

"Oh! Ed dear, look at the birds. Look at their legs—just the colour of the sea so the fish won't see them. And look at the baby one, the way it does what its mother does. Oh! I've had fun watching them."

"Sorry I'm late," Mr. Pickering said. "But wait till you hear——"

"Oh! that's all right. I've had such fun watching the birds. What did you do?"

"The darnedest thing," Mr. Pickering said.

"On Cat Cay?"

"No," he said. "Right along the coast here."

"Oh! Look at the herons. Just look. The young one's trying to catch something——"

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"Met a fellow named Wilson. Quite a piece of dark blood in him—you can see that. Just a nobody. Torgsen says his mother kept a house on the waterfront—this Wilson fellow was the result of some damn Glasgow deck-hand dropping in one time. Just scum."

"The young one is so pretty," Mrs. Pickering said. "What about him?"

"Incredible," Mr. Pickering said. "He's living like Croesus. Like Rockefeller. He's got a palace along the coast here with onyx bath-rooms and Louis Quatorze toilets and God knows what. He owns three sugar mills and two banana plantations and a steam yacht— Oh! and that reminds me, I knew there must be a woman in this somewhere."

"Why?"

The two herons had paraded far along the shore and now had turned and were dreamily coming back.

"Because Maxted was mad on them. He ran five or six at a time. You know what?—he'd hang about the harbour until he saw some popsie in on a cruise-ship that he fancied and then he'd take her home and give her a house and set her up. Not satisfied with one or two—but five or six. The big possessor."

"And is Mr. Wilson fond of the ladies too?"

Mr. Pickering laughed.

"You're pretty smart, aren't you, Mrs. Pickering?"

"I just thought."

"Yes," he said. "Mr. Wilson is fond of the ladies. And it seems Mr. Wilson and Mr. Maxted were once fond of the same lady. A girl named Louie. In fact the week before Maxted was murdered they all spent a week-end on Maxted's yacht. And now Louie is Mrs. Wilson."

"That's no surprise. Did you see her?"

"No."

"And what made you go to see Mr. Wilson, anyway, instead of going to Cat Cay?— Oh! look, the little heron is lost. It's turned around the wrong way and can't see its mother."

"Seems he'd heard of me, that's all," Mr. Pickering said. "He's got big connections in insurance—and seems he'd even heard of us. Said he'd like to see me."

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"And just you think, there are people who kill and stuff those lovely things and put them in glass cases— Oh ! look at them !——"

"You know what I think ?—and I told Torgsen so. I think Louie killed Maxted."

Along the shore the parent heron, gazing down with dreaminess at the blue-green evening sea, seemed to be waiting for its young, and Mrs. Pickering gave a quick cry of maternal delight.

"They're so intelligent, too," she said. "You see, she knows !"

"Fascinating, isn't it ?" Mr. Pickering said. "Of course it might not be. But before Maxted was murdered Wilson hadn't a bean. Just a hanger-on. But Louie had—Maxted had seen to that. And now Wilson has all the beans he needs and Louie too."

Suddenly along the shore the herons were flying. Mrs. Pickering gave a cry of dismay and saw that two bathers were running down, carrying white and scarlet wraps, from the hotel to the sea.

"They've frightened them away !"

"That reminds me," Mr. Pickering said. "I meant to have had my swim."

"Oh ! it's too late now. Let's walk instead. You can have your swim before breakfast."

"I guess the morning's better," Mr. Pickering said. "Anyway, I need more time—I got to practise with the new diving outfit Wilson lent me."

"Wilson lent you ?"

"It's the latest thing," Mr. Pickering said. "Cost the earth and it's pretty complicated. But you can stay under for a couple of hours. You should come diving, you know, it's a beautiful world down there. The colours are out of this world——"

"I don't swim that well," she said. "By the way, what about the gold ? Where does that fit in ?"

The first breeze from landward, a mere breath, seemed to creep down the mountain slopes as Mr. and Mrs. Pickering turned to walk across the sand.

"It could be Louie again," Mr. Pickering said, "couldn't it ? Louie was the favourite girl when the gold was salted down. I'll bet Louie knows where it is. And now and then, as I say, a little comes in handy for palm-oil."

"It's too fantastic."

"I guess life is too," Mr. Pickering said, "isn't it? Those dollars and sovereigns have got to come from somewhere. And it's smart for these boys to sell them when they can."

Mrs. Pickering, hardly listening, turned to see if the herons had come back to the shore, but the two delicate figures, no more than stringless kites, were sailing seaward past the edge of the promontory.

"By the way," Mr. Pickering said. "Did you see my friend the crab?"

"Yes," she said and in the humid evening she felt once again the quick cold stab of repulsion go thinly down her spine. "He was there. The ugly thing."

Next morning when Mr. Pickering came down to the shore, about six o'clock, nothing moved there except the two herons gracefully wading along the bright shallow edge of sea. They flew up at his approach and settled farther along the white sea-flattened sand as Mr. Pickering sat down to put his flippers on. Out on the expanse of rose-blue sea nothing moved except a small out-island fruit boat, slowly tacking with full white sail in the breathless air across the gold-pink path of rising sun.

When Mr. Pickering had fixed his flippers he once again had the appearance of a semi-naked, balding, upright frog. It took him some time to adjust the breathing apparatus, with its long curved tube and its big protuberant face mask, and to fix the oxygen bottle comfortably to his chest. He put on the mask and took it off again several times before it fitted.

"The trouble is it's so damn buoyant," Wilson had said. "You may find difficulty in stopping under. But you can get over that by carrying a weight or something. Put a basket on your back for your fish and put a rock in the bottom. That'll hold you down."

"I never keep my fish with me," Torgsen said. "Spear 'em and bring 'em up—that's what I say in these waters. I don't want no shark sniffing for me."

"This thing's different," Wilson said. "It's designed for stopping down. You can stay down a couple of hours with no bother. There's no point in keep coming up."

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Just before Mr. Pickering succeeded in fixing this oxygen breathing apparatus the long curved boat of the crawl-fish boys drew smoothly past the end of the promontory. Mr. Pickering waved his hand, but the two brown-skin boys, rowing quickly, were too far away to reply. When the boat had disappeared the sea was completely empty between the long dark reef and the curious half-frog, half-warrior figure of Mr. Pickering, entering the water with his blue water-spear upraised in his hand.

Soon, as the sun rose higher, it struck the black edge of the promontory of rock, heightening the startling yellow band of high-water mark. It flared too on the incense trees, lighting up the trailed butterfly ribbons of the rosy parasite orchid flowers. After nearly two hours it spread with full harsh whiteness on the entire shore, deserted except for the two herons daintily walking in the sea, the young one so like a green shadow of the other. It burned down on Mr. Pickering's bright-flowered abandoned dressing-wrap and on his empty crimson shoes.

And presently it fell too on the black eyes of the yellow crab, emerging with sinister caution from its hole in the sand—once again as if it had an appointment with Mr. Pickering that Mr. Pickering had not, for some reason, been able to keep after all.

Samuel Smiles, LL.D.

BY JOHN CONNELL

AMONG the less agreeable recollections of my childhood—thirty years ago and more—are boarding-houses and furnished rooms in small provincial towns. My mother had adopted an independent but highly unsettled way of life. While I was snug and rule-confined at school she careered zestfully and hopefully from job to job across half the counties of England and Wales. Few of the jobs were well paid; none was permanent. Into every new post she entered with guileless optimism; from it she would depart a few months later, with a small, brisk shrug of disillusionment, in pursuit of some new El Dorado as depicted in the *Situations Vacant* column of *The Daily Telegraph*. From school therefore, or from the homes of my less nomadic and strongly disapproving relations, I would trundle to Monmouth or Hertford or Pontypridd or Havant; and as my mother hurried up the length of the station platform to greet me, in my heart there would be a perplexing mixture of affectionate elation at seeing her again and a sick, snobbish dread of the new rooms, the new landlady, perhaps most terrible of all to anticipate, the new landlady's son who (so the gay assurance went) "is a jolly boy, six months older than you, at the grammar school here."

The memories of many sitting-cum-dining rooms in the many provincial terrace houses in which my mother and I thus transitorily roosted are merged now into a single desolating memory: a pervasive flavour, stuffy and insistent, of cat, fried fish and tomato ketchup; a high-piled and decorated overmantel; a huge, grey, framed engraving of a picture of the relief of Ladysmith; a small and uncomfortable sofa in front of the window; the landlady's deceased husband's certificate of membership of the Ancient Order of Buffaloes; and—between the fireplace and the sofa—one of those square, wooden

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book-cases which revolved uneasily on a small turntable. I recall this book-case as always being half-full and having a disconsolate, uncared-for appearance. Perhaps there was a small doily on the top of it and an electro-plate vase holding three dust-laden artificial roses. . . . No, that is a little hazy, but the books, the books I can see quite clearly across the great gulf of the years.

There were some Nelson's sevenpenny classics, several books about the adventures of Tarzan, two copies of a magazine called *The Sunday At Home*, *The Riddle of the Sands* by Erskine Childers, a novel with the title *Simon Called Peter*, a collection of knitting patterns with the carcase of a small moth inside it, the poems of Martin Tupper, and *Self-Help* by Samuel Smiles, LL.D.

You have but to say 'Self-Help' to me now and the vivid image of this room is evoked for me, and I am a child of twelve or so once more, resting my thin, bony legs under me on that dreadful sofa, idly fingering the pages of a book which I had no intention of reading, awaiting my mother's return from her work. The landlady comes in to lay our supper.

"Regular young book worm, aren't you?" she comments with heavy inevitability. "Ought to be out on the recreation ground on a nice afternoon like this. Still, that's your Mum's business . . ."

Had I—that mooning, solitary child of twelve—possessed the concentration and the diligence to read *Self-Help*, would I have been improved and instructed thereby? Had I stopped daydreaming, showing off and being sorry for myself, and really put my nose into the book, would I have found in it the key and guide to a useful, successful, prosperous and meritorious existence? I was the child of two vagrant parents, both of whom—either separately or together—were cheerfully incapable of settling and making a home for themselves. I longed, with an intensity of passion as secretive as it was surprising, for security, for a home of my own, for an end to this perpetual perambulation through other peoples' homes. But I let the book slip through my fingers and went on daydreaming.

Who nowadays reads the works of Samuel Smiles? Are frayed and dusty copies still to be found in the sitting-rooms of the kind of lodgings which I knew in my boyhood? Does anyone actively order his life in accordance with the principles expounded, with

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vigour, lucidity and the most admirable self-assurance, in *Self-Help*?

Most of us look a little disdainful when his name is mentioned. In conjunction with the title of his best-known and most popular book, it can provoke a derisive smile. It is generally and confidently believed that Smiles embodied—and formulated in his writings—the stuffiest, smuggest, most platitudinous of Victorian, mercantile and materialist, values and principles. He himself seems a fusty Dickensian figure, a cross perhaps between Mr. Cheeryble and Mr. Gradgrind, sanctimonious, tough and selfish.

It is sharply salutary to realise that *Self-Help*, first published in November 1859 by John Murray, has never been out of print in the succeeding ninety-five years; and that it is now in its seventy-third impression. It has been translated into every European language and a great many Asian and African languages. But it has not been filmed. Nobody has made a radio play out of it. No fashionable and influential contemporary critic has rediscovered it. There is no Smiles cult, and no society assembles annually to toast his immortal memory. No German or transatlantic professor has, as yet, been commissioned by the Third Programme to deliver a series of almost totally incomprehensible lectures upon him. I doubt whether even the most earnest, most beetle-like aspirant for a Litt.D. has submitted to his University authorities a thesis on the Philosophy and Art-Form of Samuel Smiles. His books—especially *Self-Help*—simply go on and on selling. It is all a little bewildering, and more than a little mortifying.

Perhaps the explanation simply is that Smiles had something to say of interest and importance to generations of ordinary men and women, and that he said it engagingly, frankly, convincingly. He has an almost Defoe-like capacity for taking you, in a candid and straightforward fashion, to the heart of an issue. He is without frills or obvious mannerisms. He is the decent, practical, honest chap, chatting shrewdly and agreeably to his friends and acquaintances. He buttonholes you at once, but he never bores you. Had he been born a century later he would by now, I am convinced, be the greatest possible draw that the B.B.C. Talks Department—Home Service—could ever have procured. Without Mr. Priestley's

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melancholy and quirkishness, he could have out-chapped him instantly and knocked him bang through *Woman's Hour* into *Overseas Shortwave Transmissions Only*. Smiles was made (but alas, a hundred years too early) to deliver an almost endless series of those decent, commonsense, man-to-man homilies which follow the nine-o'clock news on Sunday night—not so whimsical as Betjeman, not so grumpy as Harding, more down-to-earth than Sir John Maud, doctor, capable business man, fluent journalist, Mr. Lindsay Wellington's permanent answer to every planning problem.

Was Samuel Smiles then a neo-Elizabethan celebrity born unhappily out of his time?

During his long lifetime and thereafter he was always considered, in his character and his works, the quintessence of Victorianism. In his brisk, energetic, no-nonsense fashion he undoubtedly thought of himself as a thorough-going Victorian, a man of his century. He was certainly popular and respected in his own epoch. I have a sneaking fancy that in ours he would have attained overwhelming, nationwide, continent-traversing fame.

Was his epoch, after all, so different from ours? And was he in it vastly dissimilar from men of similar stamp and outlook in the twentieth century? It may be disturbing to strive to answer these questions. It may, in a queer way, be consoling and fortifying too.

Smiles was born at Haddington in 1812. Southern Scotland, and the Lothians in particular, enjoyed in the earlier years of the nineteenth century a steadily increasing prosperity, an accession of population and a rapid and widespread development of the amenities of civilised life. The effects of this pleasant process are visible in the neighbourhood still. It was itself the result of the settled and peaceful conditions which obtained in Southern Scotland after 1760 or thereabouts. After centuries of strife, barbaric poverty and distress, Scotland—south of the Highland line—suddenly caught up with the rest of Europe and acquired civilisation. The building of the New Town of Edinburgh was not just a solitary and fortuitous event; all over the surrounding countryside there is a mass of evidence of the vigorous, constructive activity of this epoch. Houses, schools and churches multiplied. The gentry, the farmers, the mill-owners, the professional

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folk and tradesmen grew affluent. Material prosperity and mental self-improvement marched briskly along together. Samuel Smiles, the son of a papermaker and general merchant, was born into this society ; all his life its values were his—the simple practical values of hard work, diligence, self-respect, thrift, fair dealing, good manners and honesty. The child of an age of expansion, he shared its outlook, praised its qualities and practised its principles. Buoyancy, resilience and self-confidence were natural to him, for the society in which he lived as a child and a boy was buoyant, resilient and self-confident.

He went to Edinburgh University and qualified as a doctor. For a short time he practised in his native town ; then he went south to Leeds and entered journalism, in which he was active and successful for some years. He was the kind of man who cheerfully turned his hand to anything and made a good job of it. When the Railway Age came to the North of England, Smiles was involved in it to the full.

In the mid-1840's railway development was swift and tumultuous. An energetic and versatile man found his way to it as easily and as naturally as, a century later, a similar kind of man would find his way into some form of air transport development or telecommunications. In 1845 Smiles became secretary of the Leeds and Thirsk Railway ; he was closely concerned with the purchase of and amalgamation with a number of other smaller undertakings out of which grew a sizeable railway system. The analogy with air transport is close and instructive. For nine years Smiles was in Leeds, with his office in Leeds Central Station. He moved to Newcastle to do similar work for the North Eastern Railway, but within a very few months he had been appointed to a far more onerous and responsible post, that of secretary of the South Eastern Railway, whose affairs were in a mighty tangle. Perhaps his most notable achievement, during the twelve years in which he served this Company, was to prepare and steer through Parliament and past the entrenched opposition of a multitude of interests, the scheme under which Charing Cross Station was built.

Early in his railway career Smiles became interested in the idea of writing a life of George Stephenson. He worked at it as assiduously as he could in his spare time ; the book was published in 1857 and

was from the outset a modest but firm success. Five editions of it, some 7,500 copies in all, were published in just over a year.

Smiles was led on to his next venture—*Self-Help*. His own account of it, in his Autobiography (written when he was over ninety), is a delightful and characteristic combination of ingenuousness and sound commonsense :

‘Behold me at last, at the advanced age of forty-five, a successful author ! People wondered how a person so utterly unknown in the literary world should have been able to write a successful book, especially on the topic of a railway engineer. But they did not know the long training I had had for the work, and the difficulties I had overcome—the encounter with which, indeed, had educated me—nor the reading, thinking, observation and perseverance, which are about the sole conditions for success in anything.

‘When I found that I could succeed in writing a respectable book, I took from the drawer, where it had lain so long, my rejected MS. on *Self-Help*, and thought of rewriting it and offering it to the public. I took some pains with it, and had it ready for the printer in July 1859. I intended at first to publish it without my name on the title-page ; but Mr. Murray warned me against doing so. “You ought to recollect,” he said, “that success is a lottery in literature, and you abandon your vantage-ground by publishing anonymously”. I therefore eventually agreed to give my name on the title-page.

‘My object in writing out *Self-Help*, and delivering it at first in the form of lectures, and afterwards rewriting and publishing it in the form of a book, was principally to illustrate and enforce the power of George Stephenson’s great word—PERSEVERANCE. I had been greatly attracted when a boy by Mr. Craik’s *Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties*. I had read it often, and knew its many striking passages almost by heart. It occurred to me, that a similar treatise, dealing not so much with literary achievements and the acquisition of knowledge, as with the ordinary business and pursuits of common life, illustrated by examples of conduct and character drawn from reading, observation, and experience, might be equally useful to the rising generation. It seemed to me that the most important results in daily life are to be obtained, not through the exercise of extraordinary powers, such as genius and intellect, but through the

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energetic use of simple means and ordinary qualities, with which nearly all human individuals have been more or less endowed. Such was my object, and I think that, on the whole, I hit my mark.' ¹

Self-Help is astonishingly easy to read, fresh, vigorous and trim. There is no stuffiness or pomposity about the brisk, pleasant prose in which it is written. Its didacticism is homely and unforced. Smiles, pragmatical in outlook, robustly but not dourly individualist, supplies a sound, workaday philosophy for ordinary folk. He looks at the lives and achievements of ordinary, practical men—an engineer, a potter, a surgeon, a lawyer, a scientist—and draws his moral of success through thrift, perseverance and attention to duty; it is always the same moral. His brief biographical studies are pointed and pithy, the material in them neatly shaped to the one end. He is not, of course, an ideologue, and it is far from difficult to discover why the ideologues have despised and disliked him so much. With the greatest good temper Smiles makes nonsense of almost every one of their more sterile pretensions—so their defence has been to tell whopping lies about him. He is neither cold nor selfish nor a prig. To the German philosophers and their followers, who out of windy metaphysics evolved the bleak and priggish dogma of State Socialism, Smiles must always have been especially obnoxious. His temperament was breezily empirical; faced with a task—dissecting a limb, running a railway or writing a book—he tackled it with diligence and perseverance, and on the whole (as he himself said about *Self-Help*) 'hit the mark.'

His opinions are straightforward and sensible. Here he is early in *Self-Help* expounding about the relations of governments and the governed views which, in the era of the Welfare State triumphant, can only be regarded as outrageous heresy, to be anathematised by the Red Father himself with due and terrible solemnity in the pages of *The New Statesman and Nation*:

'The Government of a nation itself is usually found to be but the reflex of the individuals composing it. The Government that is ahead of the people will inevitably be dragged down to their level, as the Government that is behind them will in the end be dragged

¹ *The Autobiography of Samuel Smiles* (John Murray, 1905), Chapter XIV, pp. 221-2.

up. In the order of nature, the collective character of a nation will as surely find its befitting results in its law and government, as water finds its own level. The noble people will be nobly ruled, and the ignorant and corrupt ignobly. Indeed, all experience serves to prove that the worth and strength of a State depend far less upon the form of its institutions than upon the character of its men. For the nation is only an aggregate of individual conditions, and civilisation itself is but a question of the personal improvement of the men, women and children of whom society is composed.

'National progress is the sum of individual industry, energy and uprightness, as national decay is of individual idleness, selfishness and vice. What we are accustomed to decry as great social evils, will, for the most part, be found to be but the outgrowth of man's own perverted life; and though we may endeavour to cut them down and extirpate them by means of Law, they will only spring up again with fresh luxuriance in some other form, unless the conditions of personal life and character be improved.'¹

Those words were written by the Secretary of the South Eastern Railway, at a time when he was wrestling with the considerable difficulties and problems of getting Charing Cross Station built. He took a modest pride, I think, in both achievements. But there is a curious irony in the reflection that, while Charing Cross Station has survived to be a major complication to London's planners and rebuilders, the sensible opinions which I have quoted have been ignored and derided by generations of our elected rulers of all Parties, and we have been engaged for the past half-century and more in a monumental—but unsuccessful—effort to prove them wrong.

But suppose Smiles was right, after all? Suppose all the thousands and thousands of men and women who, generation after generation, read *Self-Help* had believed and had acted upon his teaching?

Suppose those who manage some of our popular newspapers, the Light Programme, State-controlled or commercial television and other mass-media, had read and pondered this rather tough and uncompromising passage?

'A way in which education may be prostituted is by employing

¹ *Self-Help*, by Samuel Smiles, LL.D. (John Murray, 71st impression, 1953), Chapter I, p. 14.

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it as a mere means of intellectual dissipation and amusement. Many are the ministers to this taste in our time. There is almost a mania for frivolity and excitement, which exhibits itself in many forms in our popular literature. To meet the public taste, our books and periodicals must now be highly spiced, amusing, and comic, not disdaining slang, and illustrative of breaches of all laws, human and divine. Douglas Jerrold once observed of this tendency, "I am convinced the world will get tired (at least I hope so) of the eternal guffaw about all things. After all, life has something serious in it. It cannot be all a comic history of humanity. Some men would, I believe, write a Comic Sermon on the Mount. Think of a Comic History of England, the drollery of Alfred, the fun of Sir Thomas More, the farce of his daughter begging the dead head and clasping it in her coffin to her bosom. Surely the world will be sick of this blasphemy".

That was written in 1859. Is it the stuff to revive in 1954? Is it safer—or is it merely silly and cowardly—to leave it in its curious oblivion, bought and read by thousands decade by decade, yet copy after copy lying dusty and disregarded in the shabby book-cases of old-fashioned lodgings and boarding-houses?

Or are there some final disquieting thoughts to face, some sharp thrusts of irony which Smiles would not, I fear, have appreciated? Was he, in fact, only the forerunner of a host of exploiters of mass literacy? Did he but edge open the gate through which Newnes, Pearson, Alfred Harmsworth and many, many more were ardently and profitably to storm in later years? Is the vulgar, greedy complacency of *How to Win Friends and Influence People* and its imitators only Smiles's technique applied to twentieth-century needs and lusts? And is Lord Beaverbrook, stridently telling his readers *Don't Trust to Luck*, merely a latter-day exponent of Smilesian philosophy?

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The Idea of Progress

BY JOYCE CARY

Is there such a thing as progress in the world? The Middle Ages never dreamed of it, they thought the world bad and men worse. The only hope for them was that God in His mercy would save them from hell. The whole notion of an advancing civilisation is quite recent; it came in with the machines and education. All at once everyone, even the workers, began to grow richer. The new industrialised nation made so much money that it could afford roads, schools, hospitals, all the expensive services and administration which are needed for even a small general improvement in millions of lives.

Over a hundred and fifty years this progress became very great. Housing and sanitation were transformed; famine and plague disappeared; the criminal law was recast so that punishment grew continually milder, as the police, better paid and organised, became more efficient. The masses learnt to read and found other pleasures than drink and dog-fights. Almost everyone in Europe and America could say, 'You wouldn't believe the changes even in my own lifetime—changes for the better.' This rapid improvement seemed automatic. It did not need help from any government. It arose from invention, and one invention led to another; from trade, which flourished on competition.

This extraordinary prosperity was the source of the Victorian idea of progress and also the reason why Victorians were so suspicious of any legal restraint on free competition. It seemed to them the very spring of progress and a thing of nature. Darwin had proved, or seemed to have proved, that competition had produced humanity itself. It was nature's method of driving life forward in the scale of intelligence. Why should it not be also nature's plan for driving civilisation forward in the scale of wealth and comfort, security and

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peace, making it richer and wiser, more charitable and more happy? For free competition had certainly seemed to produce these results.

Then the war of '14 broke, to be followed by slumps, inflation, bankruptcy, unsaleable surpluses, frustration, misery, strife and confusion all over the world. And it was seen that war is merely the extreme form of competition.

The whole idea of an automatic progress was called in question. The Victorians were abused as moral crooks or laughed at for fools. And the communists cried, 'Yes, competition is all wrong—the only secret of progress is with Marx and his dialectic—he alone can bring you to a better world.' It is not surprising that in those years they made converts by the millions.

Notice that the communists, no less than the Victorian economists and philosophers, supposed themselves to have discovered an automatic progress, a providence in nature, which, if permitted free play, would certainly produce a richer, a safer, a happier world, without suffering or crime, inequality and envy. The dialectic, as Marx saw it, was automatic—it required violence only when held back by force. And it provided its own cause for violence, its own revolutionary crisis, by increasing poverty among the workers.

It is, of course, not surprising that the communists of that time believed in an automatic progress. For they were Victorians too—the notion had been implanted in their minds from earliest youth. They read all the Victorians, and Herbert Spencer was one of their great influences. Spencer was so convinced of the value of the evolutionary process in economic progress that he wanted to hand back the Post Office to private enterprise.

The communists accepted the idea of evolution from Spencer but discovered a different process to account for it, competition between capital and labour rather than between different industrial enterprises.

But communism has failed to rescue the world from disorder. It has brought in new oppression, new insecurity, new deprivation for the workers, and bad faith of a cynicism never known before. It appears simply like a vast new misfortune for the whole earth, a further plunge into confusion and anxiety.

The idea of an automatic progress, a dialectic advance, is so

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utterly discredited that no one dreams of such a fantasy. We live from day to day, and thank Heaven, or mere luck, that there is still some order, some civilisation left. But no one dares to promise that its relics will last beyond next week ; much less that things will improve of themselves.

And this profound doubt is, I think, one of the final causes of the defeatism all about us, a cause so deep that it often passes unrecognised, like a complex in the subconscious, by those who suffer most from it.

'Why,' you ask, 'should men be troubled by the loss of a superstition so new in the world, which was unknown in the first four or five thousand years of recorded history?' I think the answer should be that the industrial age brought in not only the idea of progress, but the instability of a perpetual revolution.

The Middle Ages did not expect a better world, on earth. But neither did they reckon with everlasting change, with the turmoil of a society in continual adjustment.

In their ideas, the only hope for peace and comfort in a bad world was a monolithic state, fixed forever in the same theocratic shape. Sir Thomas More, though he wrote in the Renaissance, had the typical medieval view. His *Utopia* was designed to do away with all need for change. Change, to More and his like, was the prime source of evil in the world. More loathed a heretic.

The medieval ruler could not conceive of religious tolerance. That would mean difference of faith, conflict, disloyalty. Better to burn a few heretics than allow any breach in that solid structure of law and dogma which alone sustained the millions in safety. And also kept them in their place.

But that world has gone forever. We have not only accepted the conflict of faith, the revolution, we push it forward. Every government subsidises research, and research means new invention, new shifts of power, commercial and national, new instability, change and confusion. And the speed of new discovery, and therefore of obsolescence, increases all the time.

It is not surprising that men despair of the future and won't even think of it. It is enough for them to survive among bursting store-houses of grain and famines, staggering prices and swelling costs,

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ever-rising taxes and ever-increasing debt, under the perpetual threat of a final atomic war. Their world is like a city shaken by earthquakes which go on increasing in frequency and violence. Everything is propped up, prices, trade, wages, governments, and the props are always slipping and splintering as the pressures mount. Every moment some vast elaborate construction falls down, and the air is so thick with dust that no one can see his way along the most familiar roads or know even if they exist.

Yet there are props, and a number of agencies with skill in propping. And a little examination will show that the props tend to grow in strength, the agencies in expertness.

What I want to suggest is that the situation is neither so bad as it looks, nor so new. The world has always suffered from earthquakes, social and political. It has always had to live among the dust of ruins, it has always had to prop and rebuild. True, the crash of the Roman Empire was too big for the rebuilders of that day. But the Roman Empire had become too heavy, too vast for its foundations. It rested on slave labour, on a proletarian mass without the skill or wit, even the will, to co-operate in reconstruction.

Nowadays we see whole nations, Britain, Germany, Holland, Japan, uniting to rebuild their states almost from the ground, with discipline that, in former ages, could have been expected only from trained armies. The great difference is that the proletarian mass throughout most of the world has disappeared, or is disappearing. Everywhere, governments educate. They must do so simply in order to have workers capable of running their machines. And the machines are necessary to support the standard of life which the educated worker demands.

Call this a circle, but it is not a vicious circle. It is the hope of the world.

For though there is no progress in the Victorian sense of the word, though there is no automatic principle or dialectic that will produce, by its own certain and unaided operation, a golden age of security and peace, there is a direction in human affairs.

The tribal life has almost vanished and it will never come back. The peoples demand education and with it a new standard of life, for education gives a richer power of enjoyment and those who have

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learnt how to use their imagination will never be content with a narrower existence.

Civilisation is nothing so mechanical as the Victorian progress ; it needs continual watching, continual planning. It is like a river that flows sometimes slowly, sometimes fast, sometimes over a cataract, but always one way, towards the sea. It can still flood and drown out a whole countryside, and the further it runs the bigger it grows, the more disastrous are its floods. But the nations are learning not only to rebuild their towns but to build levees along the whole course. They are beginning to study flood control, economic and social. They must, or they will be overwhelmed.

The industrial revolution, beginning about two hundred years ago, has already produced the modern democracy and abolished from it the old absolute ruler. Governments in democracies can no longer command ; they must explain and persuade.

And the people everywhere demand from government not only a reasonable standard of living but security. They hate and fear war. They have already made it impossible for any of the democracies to start an offensive war.

This is one consequence of the process of education and creative invention which is going on all round us all the time. The other is the modern weapon, terrifying in its destructive power, the rocket and the atomic bomb, which makes even swashbuckling governments fear the uncertain results of total war.

Both angles of the process from below and above have the same direction ; they converge on the same object—security, peace.

The demand from below, from the people, has produced the complex of social and economic regulation that is now a chief preoccupation of all states—props of wages, prices, international agreements on quotas, trade, tariffs, the managed currencies, the International Bank, the International Labour Office in Geneva.

Above, in governments, the fear of war, which produced the first international organisation for peace, the League of Nations, has now set up, when the League failed, another stronger League, the United Nations.

And all this organisation, driven by increasing pressures of urgency, grows steadily in comprehensiveness and power.

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I am not leaving Russia and Red China out of this account—the process has taken hold of them too, though it is still in its early stages. Russia is pushing forward education with all the means at its disposal, but her people are still semi-illiterate and little removed from the proletarian mass, easy to replace, easy to drive. Yet even in Russia, the masters, the drivers, are now offering bribes as well as threats—more food, leisure, clothes, living space. And that ruthless bureaucracy does not waste anything, time or money. It offers inducements only because they are necessary, because already the workers must be conciliated.

The peace campaign of recent propaganda was not designed only to weaken the West, but to reassure the Russian people. They, too, passionately desire peace.

Red China is educating and must educate to build industry and feed her starving peasantry. And both the Russian and the Red Chinese governments fear total war. One, in spite of her continual abuse of the United Nations, sends there the best men she has to represent her; the other is extremely anxious to get in.

Neither Russia nor Red China, nor any of the mid- and far-Eastern states, is very far on the road of technical industry which has brought about modern democracy, with its balance of power between government and people, its love of liberty, its hatred of war, and its ability to make its will respected by the state. The millennium is not just round the corner even for the democracies.

Hitler was chief of a highly industrialised state and he led it to war. He had the genius of the spellbinder which, for good or ill, is one of the most powerful forces on earth. But he had to make the promises of a demagogue; to offer the things the people demand, a better life, peace. His very lies acknowledged the power of the people.

He hypnotised, swindled and bullied them into war. But what was the consequence to Germany and the world? A ruinous defeat and the first effective combination of powers, resolved to secure peace even by force of arms; powers which, challenged, did go to war, in Korea, to establish its authority and thrust back an aggressor.

This is the first time in history that an international authority has actually put an army in the field, to support the law. It is true that the United States carried most of the weight of the war, but that

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too is significant—it reveals the direction of the process. Thirty years ago, in spite of a strong President, they went out from the League of Nations for fear of being drawn into a war not of their own making ; now they are the chief movers and partners in a war which has, more than any other event, made the new League, the United Nations, respected and formidable.

That too may fail. It will certainly be modified. But if it can not be made to do the necessary job, it will be very quickly replaced by some other, more efficient power.

No one can say how soon an efficient world authority will arrive and in what shape. I suspect that it will not come from any neat paper constitution for world federation. Its practice and laws are more likely to be devised at the moment, to answer specific crises ; its sanctions to rest on the will and arms of certain great powers working together, rather than any international force, recruited and trained as such.

All that seems to me assured is that world peace and security are inevitable. Not only from the fear of the new arms, but from the complex working of the creative genius of man producing a continuous revolution that compels all governments to seek international agreement and stability.

This does not abolish the private and personal insecurity of life, the revolutions of industry, taste, the everlasting tragic dilemmas of free souls in that same world of creation, but merely international war. One does not look for Theleme. But one can expect the end of that stage in international relations which, within the nation state, disappeared with the feudal baron and the Wars of the Roses. World affairs have a direction, and it is towards a general world law, and world peace. It can be checked but it is not to be reversed. And the effect of any check, like that of the Hitler war, is to dam and build up the force behind, until it breaks through and rushes forward with still greater speed and weight.

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A Matter of Life and Death

BY ANNE RIDLER

I did not see the iris move,
I did not feel the unfurling of my love
This was the sequence of the flower :
First the leaf from which the bud would swell,
No prison, but a cell,
A rolled rainbow ;
Then the sheath that enclosed the blow
Pale and close
Giving no hint of the blaze within,
A tender skin with violet vein.
Then the first unfurling petal
As if a hand that held a jewel
Curled back a finger, let the light wink
Narrowly through the chink,
Or like the rays before the sunrise
Promising glory.

And while my back is turned, the flower has blown.
Impossible to tell
How this opulent blossom from that spick bud has grown
The chrysalis curled tight,
The flower poised for flight—
Corolla with lolling porphyry wings
And yellow tiger markings
A chasing-place for shade and light :
Between these two, the explosion
Soundless, with no duration.

(I did not see the iris move,
I did not feel my love unfurl.)

A Matter of Life and Death

The most tremendous change takes place in silence,
Unseen, however you mark the sequence,
Unheard, whatever the din of exploding stars.

Down the porphyry stair
Headlong into the air
The boy has come : he crouches there
A tender startled creature
With a fawn's ears and hair-spring poise
Alert to every danger
Aghast at every noise.
A blue blink
From under squeezed-up lids
As mauve as iris buds
Is gone as quickly as a bird's bright wink.
Gone—but as if his soul had looked an instant through the chink.
And perfect as his shell-like nails,
Close as are to the flower its petals,
My love unfolded with him.
Yet till this moment what was he to me ?
Conjecture and analogy :
Conceived, and yet unknown.
Behind this narrow barrier of bone
Distant as any foreign land could be.

*I have seen the light of day,
Was it sight or taste or smell ?
What I have been, who can tell ?
What I shall be, who can say ?*

He floats in life as a lily in the pool
Free and yet rooted ;
And strong though seeming frail
Like the young fritillary
That trails its first-appearing bud
As though too weak to raise it from the mud
But is stronger than you dream
And later lifts the paper lantern
High upon an arched and sinewy stem.

Anne Ridler

His smiles are all largesse,
Need ask for no return,
Since give and take are meaningless
To one who gives by needing
And takes our love for granted
And grants a favour even by his greed.
The ballet of his twirling hands
His chirping and his loving sounds,
Perpetual expectation
Perpetual surprise—
Not a lifetime satisfies
For watching, every thing he does
We wish him to do always.

*Only in a lover's eyes
Shall I be so approved again ;
Only the other side of pain
Can truth again be all I speak,
Or I again possess
A saint's hilarious carelessness.*

He rows about his ocean
Of leaning cliffs and towers,
A horizontal being,
Straddled by walking people
By table-legs and chairs ;
And sees the world as you can see
Upside-down in water
The wavering heights of trees
Whose roots hang from your eyes.
Then Time begins to trail
In vanishing smoke behind him,
A vertical creature now
With a pocket full of nails,
One of a gang of urchin boys
Who proves his sex by robber noise—
Roar of the sucking dove
And thunder of the wren.

A Matter of Life and Death

Terror waits in the woods,
But in the sun he is brazen
Because our love is his
No matter what he does ;
His very weakness claims a share
In the larger strength of others,
And perfect in our eyes
He is only vulnerable there.

But not immortal there, alas.
We cannot keep, and see. The shapes of clouds
Which alter as we gaze
Are not more transient than these living forms
Which we so long to hold
For ever in the moment's mould.
The figures frozen in the camera's record
And carried with us from the past
Are like those objects buried with the dead—
Temporal treasures irrelevant to their need.
Yes, this is the worst,
The living truth is lost,
And is supplanted by these album smiles.

*What you desire to keep, you slay :
While you watch me, I am going.
Wiser than you, I would not stay
Even if I could : my hope's in growing.
My form as a dapple of sun that flies
On the brook, is changed ; my earliest word
Is the call you learnt to recognise
And now forget, of a strange bird.*

Yet, as the calyx contains the life of the bud
So is the bud contained within the flower
Though past in time :
The end is not more true than the beginning,
Nor is the promise cancelled by the prime.
Not only what he was, and is, but what he might have been
In each is rolled within.

Anne Ridler

Our life depends on that:
What other claim have we to resurrection?
For now that we can contemplate perfection
We have lost the knack of being it. What should be saved
Of these distorted lives?
All that we can pray is

Save us from nothingness.

Nonentity, the universal dread,
Which makes us feel an irrational pity for the dead,
And fight the anodyne
Even while we long for deliverance from pain.

So, I have read,
When a man gave his darling in grief to the grave
About her neck in a locket tied
He set this urgent word—
Not to drink Lethe, at all costs not to forget.
And this is truth to us, even yet.
For if life is eternal
All must be held, though all must be redeemed.
But what can ever restore
To these sad and short-coming lives of ours
The lovely jocund creatures that we were
And did not know we were?
What can give us at once
The being and the sense?

Why, each within
Has kept his secret for some Resurrection:
The wonder that he was
And can be, which is his
Not by merit, only by grace.
It comes to light, as love is born with a child,
Neither with help nor herald
(I did not see the iris move)
Neither by sight nor sound—
I did not feel the unfurling of my love.



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A Day in the Country

BY DAN JACOBSON

WE had spent the day on the farm, as we usually did every Sunday. Rather a dull day it had been, I remember, in April, too cold to go swimming in the river, and there had been nothing much else to do except sit in the car and watch my father as he helped the boys round up the cattle driven down from the veld, and then walk through them, stick in hand, prodding their sides, stopping to discuss at length what to do about the heifer who was going blind in one eye, or what a pity it was that this miserable beast should be in calf again when what it needed was a long rest. My father could spend hours like that, perfectly happy among the slow red cows and oxen, with the African herd-boy who knew each head of cattle as an individual and respected it as such. And my father prodded, leaned against his stick, screwed his face up against the sun, listened to the herd-boy's comments, and sprained his ankle on one of the rocks that littered the piece of veld where the cattle were gathered.

When he sprained his ankle, my father had had enough. He got back into the car and we set off home, with the herd-boy's children riding with us on the back bumper, as far as the gate. At the gate they climbed off and opened it for us; we passed through, they waved, and we waved back. Now there was just the thirty-mile run home, through Rietpan, side-stepping Dors River, meeting the tarred road to take us to the Boer War Memorial—and so home. My brother was driving, my father and mother sat in front with him, and my sister and I were in the back seat. The first stretch of road was really bad, not a road at all, but a cart-track across Rietpan Commonage, a piece of veld that had been grazed to complete nudity by the donkeys of the villagers. A few donkeys, a cow or two, one or two goats: those were generally the sole possessions of the Rietpan

A Day in the Country

villagers, that and a mud-walled house and five irrigated acres. But though Rietpan was poor, it had its location, even poorer, where the black-skinned inhabitants of the village lived. They were conducting some sort of religious rite as we passed the location, and a man held up a cross of plaited twigs towards us. He was wearing a blue cowl on his head. The wind blew all their clothes in bright fluttering rags as they walked. The sun shone bare upon them through the wind.

Inside the car it was dull and dusty, with the Sunday newspapers in a mess on the floor. My sister was knitting. We passed through Rietpan quickly, in a cloud of dust, with a greeting for Major le Roy on his front stoep and a pause to give way for someone's sheep. The road between Rietpan and Dors River was better, and my brother increased his speed.

My father looked up from the comic he was reading. He read it with an air of absolute puzzlement: "Who reads these things?" he asked. Then: "Oh, oh, oh, boy, slow down." He placed a hand on my brother's arm. There was a car standing in the middle of the road, and a group of people at the side of the road, looking down at something.

We thought it was an accident. It looked like an accident. We prepared ourselves for something horrible and warily our car crept up to the other, then drove past it and stopped.

"What is it?" my sister said shrilly.

"I don't know." We couldn't see. The other car was blocking our view of what the little group was seeing. Our car went forward a few feet. Dear God, it was an accident. The group stood over a little African child, a group of white men and women. A few Africans stood a little way off, looking at what was going on, and saying nothing. The white people were talking to one another. They seemed quite unmoved, almost light-hearted, but the black child lay still on the ground. I could see its spindly legs like winter branches of a tree, lying still on the ground.

"What is it?" my father called out through the window of the car, and as he did so, one of the white men stooped and picked the child up. The black legs kicked wildly, and a shriek went up from the child. I saw one of the Africans take a pace forward, then fall

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back. The group turned to their car, one man still carrying the child. And then I saw a strange thing. They were laughing, all of them were laughing. The child still screamed and kicked, and then writhed over in the man's arms, away from the motor-car, butting its head into the broad grey-shirted chest, as a child turns into its mother's arms for protection. We saw white face after face, all bared in smiles, and their laughter surrounded the thin screams of the child, until one could no longer believe that what one heard was true—a scream of fear.

"What is it?" my father called again. But no one took any notice. One of the men ran forward and opened the bonnet of the car. We heard him say in Afrikaans, "Come on, put him in," and the child screamed again, awfully.

But we knew now. It wasn't an accident, it was a game. I don't know whether we felt more relief or disgust. One of the grinning men saw us watching them, and still with his grin, he waved to us that we could go on. They didn't need our help; it wasn't an accident. None of us grinned back at him. I think he saw that we weren't amused at his game for he looked away.

"For God's sake let's go."

"I've had enough of this."

My brother started the car. As we drove off I said, "What dirty swine." I looked through the back window of the car. They had put the child back on the road, one of the men was standing half-way in his car, the bonnet was down. Apparently the game was breaking up. We hoped that it was our condemnation that had broken it up. Yet there was a faint taste of guilt in each of our mouths that we had just looked our condemnation and not said anything to them, not made a scene in the name of humanity. But we were used to that sort of scene and that sort of guilt. Together they almost make up a way of life.

* * * * *

We had driven on only a short distance when with a roar of wind and a cloud of dust the car passed us. As it whipped past, one of the men in it leaned his head, half his body, out of the window, and shouted something at us. None of us heard what he was shouting,

A Day in the Country

it was lost in the wind and the dust. All we saw was a white shirt and a white face and a pair of bright red lips opening and closing grotesquely.

Now you don't shout insults at my father. My brother and I swore ineffectually at the billows of dust which followed their car, but my father, in a moment, was trembling with rage.

"Chase them," he shouted.

"Don't be mad," my brother said.

"Then stop the car."

"Why? What for?"

"I'll show you why. Stop the car." My brother didn't so my father leaned over and switched off the ignition key.

My brother lost his temper as the car slowed down and stopped. "All right take your bloody car," he said and got out and came in the back, slamming the door behind him.

"Michael, what are you going to do?" my mother asked.

My brother and I were both yelling at my father to leave it, cut it out, forget the whole business, and he was saying, "No one shouts at me like that. No one shouts at me like that," as we tore along the road. We could see the other car ahead of us, still raising dust. But we were catching up with it. Soon we were in the car's cloud of dust. Small stones struck against the windshield, and we could see very little through the grey murk.

"Michael, you're going to have an accident."

"I'm not going to have an accident."

"For God's sake, Dad, let's not have a scene."

"What do you mean let's not have a scene, when they shout at me like that?"

"You don't even know what he shouted."

"I know well enough what he shouted."

"What did he shout?"

"No one shouts at me like that."

We came to the cross-roads of the main road to Lyndhurst and the Rietpan-Dors River road. The front car went towards Dors River, so we went that way too, still at a dangerously high speed.

"Michael, you're going to have an accident."

Dors River was about us. J. Wassenaar *Algemene Handelaar*/

Dan Jacobson

General Dealer. There was the station. The road passed J. Wassenaar and then turned round a corner, the hotel, the Savoy, with two petrol-pumps in front. Then there was a house, another, a piece of veld, two more houses, and a last shop. In front of the last shop stood the black Dodge we had been chasing. The people were climbing out of it. One of them, the man in the white shirt, the one who had shouted, saw us coming and stood looking at us with his mouth open.

Again we drew level with the car. Inside our car, everyone with the exception of my father was dreading the scene that we knew was about to follow.

We stopped. My father said: "How dare you shout at me like that."

Now they were all out of their car. There were six of them, three men and three women. They stood at various points round their car, looking at us.

The young man in the grey shirt said, "What's the matter with you?" He was big and dirty, the one who had been carrying the child. He wore a broad-brimmed hat on the back of his head, and it made his face look round and flabby, under the circling rim of his hat. But he was big and strong, with enormous bare arms folded on his chest. I knew that if it did come to a fight he would be the one to give us the most trouble, and the one who would probably beat us at that. He walked over to our car, arms still folded, contemptuously, and said again: "What's the matter with you?"

But he was speaking English. Was that already a victory for us? He was speaking our language, we weren't speaking his. But he was big, much bigger than any of us as he stood at the driver's window of the car and said: "What's the matter with you?"

My father suddenly blazed out at him. "What sort of a person are you? First you torture a child that's done nothing to you, and then you scream at someone you're passing on the road. Well let me tell you that I'm not a little Kaffir piccanin. You can't do what you like with me. I'll teach you manners before I'm finished with you."

The man said, "How?" He added: "You're too old." And

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it was true, pitifully true, my father was too old to fight him. He could have killed the old man.

This was the cue for my brother and myself. We climbed out of the car and walked round. The big man wheeled to face us. I saw his muscles tighten under the hair of his arms and I knew that if we were to win this argument it wouldn't be by force. But we stared at each other as though we weren't frightened. He probably wasn't.

My father said: "You people make me sick. You've got no idea how to behave. But if you think you can go round bullying everybody like you bully that Kaffir child you're mistaken." He opened the door of the car as though to come out, and quickly the man darted at it, to slam it on him. My brother moved towards the man with me a little way behind him. My brother said: "No you don't." He was panting as though he had been running in a race as he spoke.

Now, if there was to be a fight, it would be now. But there was no fight, and I did not understand why, as the old man, apparently the father of the two younger ones, came up and said, "You've got no right to talk like that about my people. We weren't doing anything to the piccanin." He gestured, almost appealingly.

We stared at him. He said again, "You've got no right to talk like that about my people," and then I realised that our fear—the fear that we would be called "Bloody Jews," the fear which perhaps had kept our mouths closed when we had seen the piccanin being tortured—was his fear too. He, the Afrikaner who spoke English to us, felt that my father was sitting in his car and despising him for the race he belonged to, and judging him and his race by what we had seen on the road, and I realised, how happily, that the father did not want to be judged by that act, and did not want his son to fight us, for even if we should fight and his son should beat us, our original and damning judgement would remain, would even be confirmed. He didn't want to beat us, he wanted us to think well of his race, and how could he do that while the piccanin screamed with terror and kicked helplessly against his son's arms? He stayed his son's arm, and said, "It was only a bit of fun and you had no right to swear at us."

"Swear at you?" my father asked.

Dan Jacobson

"Yes, swear at us," the other son said, coming up. I saw then why his lips were so red. It was lipstick on his mouth. It must have come from the lips of one of the girls who were leaning against the mudguards of the other car, watching the scene. Like his father, this son did not want to fight. He said, "We heard you swearing as you drove off."

"You were the one," my father said, interrupting him. "You were the one who leaned out of the car and shouted." My father looked at him.

He wiped his mouth with his hand. There was another smear of lipstick on his cheek-bone. He said, "I shouted at you to mind your own business."

"But we said nothing to you. We didn't like what you were doing, but we didn't say anything to you."

"You said 'bloody swine.'"

"That's simply not true," my father said.

I said nothing.

"I heard you," the man repeated.

"You couldn't have heard it because no one said it."

And despite this foolish wrangling, the tension remained where it had been all along, where it had been when it had looked as though there was to be a physical fight. The unspoken words lay heavily on our tongues: *Dutchmen, Jews*. But they were never used. Racial tensions usually hasten fights, but this time they didn't, for they were too widely shared. Our fear was theirs: it was almost as though we co-operated with one another to keep the significance of the argument hidden, yet never for a moment forgot it. Had we not been Jews, we may have reproved them more strongly for what they did to the piccanin—for kinship in oppression, or fear of oppression, has two sides, one less noble than the other; and had they not been Afrikaners who feared that their reputation was one of brutality, uncouthness and oppression—all of which they had confirmed, they feared—they might simply have fought us off. But we were all prevented from fighting, and prevented from peace.

I remember the father saying, "Do you think we would have done anything to that piccanin? We aren't mad people. It was just a bit of fun among ourselves."

A Day in the Country

And the younger son, who did not want to fight, spoke earnestly to me. "You see this little native child ran right across our car, in front of our car, and I had to brake like hell not to knock him over. So we thought we'll give him a lesson he'll remember. It's for his own good too, you know. He'll be a damn sight more careful now. He'll look what's going on before he runs across the road. Perhaps he'll live longer that way." Tentatively he smiled at me.

The father was saying, "You see that boy there, he goes to university. In Pretoria. Already he's in his second-year studies. A university student. Do you think that people like that, university students, gentlemen, educated people, are going to do anything that they'll be ashamed of afterwards? . . ."

I said, "You made a mistake. No one shouted 'bloody swine.'" What I said was true, but it was a lie too. In all that squalor it hardly mattered, but I had to add: "But we didn't like what you were doing."

"All right, then I shouldn't have shouted at you from my car. But it was our business what we were doing with that piccanin, especially as we weren't going to hurt him. It was only a bit of sport."

"Not a very nice sport," my mother called out. We seemed to be winning all the way down the line. The big son had moved away and was being ignored by everybody. The other two continued their laboured explanations, struggling for English words to express themselves in. Once the father veered towards an aggressive tone, and then, as though remembering the faces in the car, closed and hostile, with the struggling black body in his son's arms, as guilty as blood, he became defensive again.

So a sort of peace did come, and we got back into the car. No one shook hands with anyone, there had been no reconciliation to warrant that. But no blows had been struck, and no one had called anyone a bloody Dutchman or a bloody Jew, so everything was as well as could be expected. Better really, for us, because we still despised them. We despised that family: it is not our fault they misinterpreted it. And they should have known that we were as frightened of them as they were of us. We left them there, outside their white-washed shop with the house behind it, that looked across

Dan Jacobson

the sand road to the railway line and the railway paddock where one chestnut horse was growing thin in transit between two lost farms.

It was a quiet journey home. Everyone was feeling depressed and beaten, though, as I have explained, the victory was ours. But we had all lost, so much, somewhere, further back, along that dusty road.

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Solitude and Patriotism

Thoughts in Gryneium

BY FREYA STARK

Not houses finely roofed or the stones of walls well builded, nay nor canals nor dockyards make the city, but men able to use their opportunity.
—ALCAEUS, Sixth Century B.C.

THE landscape, as one penetrates into Aeolis, changes with a scarcely perceptible gradation ; it loses the Mona Lisa subtlety of Ionia, that delicate art which implies by withholding. The Chinese or Persian draughtsman, simplifying his tools, makes the line of a brush or pen sensitive enough to carry the whole weight of his meaning : and I feel this to be the secret also of the Ionian landscape—held in flawless contours and lit by a pure light, and almost independent of detail or of colour. So Herodotus must have felt, for he says that ‘these Ionians chance to have their cities established in the fairest place for climate of all men that we know. For neither the parts to the north nor the parts to the south are like Ionia ; for those are oppressed by the cold and the wet, and these by the heat and the drought.’

That is the accent of affection. From what I remember, there is no particular difference of climate, and the worst rain I have met outside Dartmoor was in Ionia. The ‘climate’ that Herodotus felt so clearly was, I believe, this strange and detached perfection, this feeling in the landscape that the *essential*, with the very minimum of trimming, is always there. Perhaps this is also as near as can be to a definition of classic art ?

However this may be, Herodotus goes on to say that the Aeolians ‘chanced to have built their cities in a more fruitful land than the Ionians, but one not so blest by the seasons’ : and as one drives northward towards Pergamum, the fruitfulness appears in an

Solitude and Patriotism

exuberance of slopes and fanning valleys where the olive-grown hillsides under their naked summits shimmer and toss, like 'azure-eyed Argive ships' ¹ round a headland.

And nowhere in the world can the olive be so beautiful—not even in Zante, not even below Amphissa, nor on the terraces of Sicily or the hills of Provence. Nowhere else, except perhaps in the clefts around Cyrene, and there in a meagre way, have I seen it look *indigenous*. It grew wild a hundred years ago in Mytilene, and as it stands now about its landscape in careless profusion, no longer so carefully clipped as before the Greeks departed, one knows it to be at home. When the tree is ripening and hangs over-jewelled, with every pendant berry graceful on a stem of its own, swaying in the winds' arms, with that backward toss that shows the small white edges of its leaves like teeth—it relaxes languidly, because so heavily laden, like the beauty—a little overfull—of the later marbles, or those Lydian women transparent in rose-coloured gauze, who flitted about the pleasure park of Sardis.

Gryneium was another of the Aeolian towns that crossed the northern road, after the 'Harbour of the Achaeans, where are the altars of the twelve gods,' ² three miles or so beyond Myrina; and, as at Myrina, the tourist cuts through without noticing that it is there. It ran mostly along what are now rather empty slopes to the east of the main road; but it was celebrated for a temple of Apollo, which stood west of the road on a low, almost flat, very small headland of its own, washed on either side by quiet waters enclosed in a bay where Pitane, the most northerly of the Aeolian coast-towns, shows in the distance. There on the water's edge the temple stood: and its squared temenos and the blocks of its foundation remain with trees growing out of their stones, and cornfields in between. Pausanias travelled along the road of his day and saw it, a temple of white marble, in 'a most beautiful grove of Apollo, with cultivated trees and all those which, although they bear no fruit, are pleasing to smell or look upon.' It must have shone reflected in the water as its poor descendence is reflected now.

Where the shallow ploughing turns bits of black or red earthenware over and over on the ground, I found a piece of the white marble with two Greek letters carved upon it. The drums of columns



GRYNEIUM, ASIA MINOR



THE GREEK THEATRE AT HIERAPOLIS

Freya Stark

lie about, fluted and plain ; on one of them, under a thorny dwarf-oak, unworthy of the adjectives of Pausanias, a shepherd boy was sitting watching his sheep browse in the sacred courts. One of the temple treasures seen by Pausanias was a linen breastplate, not very useful in war, he thinks, but helpful to hunters because the teeth of lions and leopards break off in it. He himself cannot have been much of a hunter, I believe, or he would not speak so casually of what, however sporting one may wish to appear, must anyway be an uncomfortable moment. The breastplate was a beautiful work, like that, perhaps, which the king of Egypt sent to the Lacedaemonians, of linen woven with cotton and gold, so fine that every thread was twisted with 'three hundred and sixty threads, all visible.'³ Another such was in the temple of the Athena of Lindos in Rhodes, also dedicated by Amasis, during whose reign in the sixth century B.C. a constant stream of communication passed between Greek and Carian mercenaries in Egypt and the shores of their homes ; and temple walls no doubt were hung about with souvenirs of travel and votive offerings after a safe return.

The distance of these towns one from another, and the loneliness then as now of the hills between them, explain the love of the Greek for his city. The only similar condition I can think of in modern life—rapidly disappearing—is the pioneering West of America and Canada. Great monasteries in the Middle Ages must have spoken with a voice of the same kind. But the monastery's life was always a little beyond the level of every day, and even the most earth-bound monk could not enclose all his affection within the walls ; while as for the New World—the church soon ceased to be the pioneering centre and the cities of the Middle and the West have been built round the general store. The friendly quality of the store, its anxiety to look after the people of its district, the way that—even in New York—the great festivals of religion centre round shop windows, all is I believe reminiscent of lonely little centres where the enterprising merchant (or the Company up North) provided all the novelty there was.

In the Greek city, the centre was a Hero or a God. The oars dipped at the headland, the olive-grey slopes, fields of chick-peas and wheat and barley, and villages with roofs of reeds appeared. The

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city shone from far away. Above her landing-stage, the fluted columns showed double in a waveless bay. One could see porticoes beyond, and the agora with its market shops, citizens' houses round little courts, and the straight street for chariots, with other streets branching off from it, less well attended to, if one can judge from the general ways of the Levant today. And after the very early years, one saw the fine walls of cut stone, block upon block laid with the delicacy of sculpture, so that, even now, the remaining stretches, that climb hillsides far beyond the visible ruins of Greek cities, have an exquisite vitality as if the pride and enthusiasm of their building shone in every join.

'The people should fight for their law as for a wall,' says Heraclitus. Men have lived in the stones they put together, from Avebury to Chartres and beyond; but no one, I believe, after the Greek, has put so much of himself into surfaces of walls, straightforward and entirely unadorned.

Here in the city even the gods were your own, bound with a give and take which only the Roman faith shows today in places quite remote. I am asked now and then by friends to light candles for them in churches where a Madonna is more efficacious than elsewhere; in fact, Protestant as I am, I prefer to pay my candle to St. Anthony, when I owe one, in his own church at Padua which happens also to be near my home. This I do unreflecting. But how else could you act in Asia Minor twenty-five centuries ago, where the sky and the temple-roof (under which the god lived familiar in his half-twilight) were framed by hill summits whose barren pebbly ridges enclosed all the safety one could know? And there was not merely safety, but also pride. For these cities were the seaports of the great Asiatic road; and no labour was thought too heavy, either in the quarrying of the marble from its hill, or the fluting and working and chiselling of it to its final form.

'The city is the teacher of the man.'⁴

The sound of it comes personified through the ages. The friendships between cities have a personal depth about them. When a play represented Miletus after her fall, the Athenians wept in their theatre, and fined the author a thousand drachmas 'because he had

put them in mind of their troubles'; and Miletus itself, when Sybaris was taken, shaved the heads of its men and went into deep mourning, 'because these two cities were the closest friends of all the cities that we know.'⁵

Heartfelt devotion, strangely enough, explains, I believe, not only the power of the city, that could inflict the punishment of exile, but also the almost inhuman lengths of treason to which an exile would go in order to get back.

'Sotades, proclaimed a Cretan as he was, was victorious [in the Olympic games of 384 B.C.]. But at the next festival he made himself an Ephesian, being bribed to do so by the Ephesian people. For this he was banished by the Cretans.'⁶ As if we should banish Charlie Chaplin if he were to become American.

Alcibiades and half the remembered names and parties, of his century and the one before and after, have made the perfidy of exiles too notorious to be gone into. But the point about them is that they are mentioned in a matter-of-fact manner by the ancient historians, as if there were a *mitigating circumstance* in the public opinion of their day: and this I believe was so, and was the recognition that love of city, like love of woman in a French *crime passionnel*, allowed a man to get away with almost anything.

The high passion has come down in the world, but I have still found it, centred on small places in poor and lonely lands—as in South Arabia where there is danger between one settled township and the next, or the high villages of the Elburz and Kurdistan. If you meet someone from there in a foreign country, they will talk of their homes in soft and rounded voices, as one talks of one's love: it is moving to hear a tough rugged man speak so of a little plot of barren hills and sparing water which scarce three or four hundred people in the whole world know.

Lucian describes cities as hives where 'each man has his sting and stings his neighbour'; but this was in an easier and later day. And though history makes it certain that there was truth in the simile, and though I have little learning to imagine how a Greek city worked in detail, yet I am convinced that I know what the Aeolian mercenary felt as he rounded the promontory which gave the temple of Gryneium and the hill above it to his sight. It was a feeling which had the

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meaning of geography behind it ; not only the city, but all the spaces separating it from all other cities, and all the difficulties of news and of travel were in the sentiment of home : even now, as one sails in a small craft along the loneliness of the more southerly peninsulas of Asia Minor, this feeling catches one in sight of some ragged nestling township in a bay, the evening's goal, although no ties bind one and there is nothing intrinsic to admire—it is an emotion built up out of its contrary emotions, humanity after loneliness, the beauty of a star.

And here as far as I can see it, is the one thing we cannot recapture out of the ancient day.

' Had we but world enough and time ' : we can compass time, if we set about it and cut half the modern speed gadgets out of our lives ; but space is not to be invented. It can still be found, with increasing difficulty ; it is already the luxury of our age ; but a day is threatening when every house in the world will have another house in view : and then the feeling of the Greek for his city, or of the Hebrew for that matter—for the city that is set upon a hill—will become as incomprehensible as the dead languages of these coasts—whose words can be deciphered when the meaning has gone. Already in the Roman age, when there was almost a ribbon development along the southern seaboard of Cilicia, and when the population of Asia Minor had grown to be far denser than it is now, the feeling had changed.

' The poet says dear city of Cecrops ; and wilt thou not say, dear city of Zeus ? ' ⁷

The crash of the whole ancient world was required to make us turn from the city of our fathers to the city of God as Augustine saw it under the darkness of the Vandals. If the world now is to be deprived of both these safeties, we may be poor indeed.

¹ *Lyra Graeca*, Bacchylides, Fifth Century B.C.

² Strabo.

³ Herodotus.

⁴ *Lyra Graeca*, Simonides, Sixth Century B.C.

⁵ Herodotus.

⁶ Pausanias.

⁷ Marcus Aurelius.

Somersby and Background : A Fragment

BY BETTY MILLER

BEFORE his Cambridge days, the only experience which Alfred Tennyson had had of life beyond the walls and wolds of Somersby was that acquired between his seventh and his twelfth year at the Grammar School at Louth. This was the school selected by his parents for William de Quincey, elder brother of Thomas, for the disquieting reason that he had, at home, 'been found wholly unmanageable.' Unmanageable in this sense the dreamy young Alfred can scarcely have been, and yet even he, on occasion, was caned so severely that it was several days before he could hold a knife and fork in comfort : another child was so brutally flogged that he had to stay in bed for six weeks afterwards. A pupil at the same school was Edward John Eyre. Is it, perhaps, possible to associate the disciplinary régime endured at Louth with the reaction of Governor Eyre, when he put down, with conspicuous violence, a revolt of the native population in Jamaica in 1865 ?

The experience of those years was scarcely of a kind to reconcile a sensitive child to the realities of the external world ; and it is small wonder that after so rigorous an exile Tennyson returned with rapture to the haven of Somersby, to the 'sweet birth-place' that eight years later he was still apostrophising as the 'Home of my delight.' Once more, scribbling poetry in the little attic room, or reading beneath the apple trees in the sloping garden, the old seclusion enfolded him ; and just how isolated the Rector's family was amid the wolds and 'the waste enormous marsh' may be gathered from the fact that in the year of Tennyson's birth there were in all only seventy inhabitants in the surrounding parish. Not that either sons or daughters showed much inclination to stray : in 1827, when *Poems by Two*

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Brothers appeared, 'none of the authors,' according to Tennyson, 'had ever been beyond their native county, and hardly beyond their native town.'¹ It is necessary only to turn to *The Lover's Tale* to discover the deeper and more disabling effects of that prolonged isolation. Written at the age of eighteen, and withheld from publication for more than fifty years, *The Lover's Tale* is the first in a long series of poems to establish what for the poet was later to become almost the *sine qua non* of all marital love—consanguinity. Julian and Camilla—for good measure she is both cousin and foster-sister—are the prototypes of those Tennysonian lovers who, as Sir Harold Nicolson has pointed out, are always 'either closely related or have played at man and wife together in the nursery.' In this case, intimacy has an even earlier origin.

She was my foster sister : on one arm
The flaxen ringlets of our infancies
Wander'd, the while we rested : one soft lap
Pillow'd us both : a common light of eyes
Was on us as we lay : our baby lips,
Kissing one bosom, ever drew from thence
The stream of life, one stream, one life, one blood,
One sustenance . . .

Sister and brother—for 'by that name I moved upon her breath'—were not to be separated, and in 'Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest harmony,' the two

slept
In the same cradle always, face to face.
Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing lip,
Folding each other, breathing on each other,
Dreaming together (dreaming of each other
They should have added), till the morning light
Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy pane
Falling, unscal'd our eyelids, and we woke
To gaze upon each other.

Alfred Tennyson was only thirteen months old when, for the first time, a daughter was born into this family of boys. In the light of the passage above quoted (and without wishing to treat *The Lover's*

¹ This is true only of Alfred and Charles: Frederick left Louth in 1818, and was sent to Eton.

Tale as yet another *Tale* from the Vienna Woods), the impression arises that it was not so much the spiritual isolation of Somersby, as the material overcrowding of the Rectory nurseries that was in the first place responsible for that remarkable pattern of inbred alliances—between cousins or infatuated toddlers—which was, it seems, the only guise under which the poet could bring himself creatively to consider the condition of love between the sexes.

Although cousin Camilla partakes, recognisably, of the physical characteristics of the Tennyson sisters—like them, she is statuesque in build, like them, she has 'bright black hair' and 'dark dark eyes'¹—she is otherwise too nebulous to permit us to discern, through her, what the eighteen-year-old poet may have regarded as the essential traits of his ideal woman. Nor is it at all certain that, for him, such an ideal yet existed. There is no possibility of discovering it in the album verses that, in his late teens or early twenties, he so conscientiously addressed to various young women: the charms, laboriously differentiated, of *Rosalind*, *Madeline*, *Adeline*, *Lisette*, *Eleänore*, *Margaret* or *Marion* are so synthetic in flavour that it can come as no great surprise to learn from the poet himself that 'all these ladies were evolved, like the camel, from my own consciousness.' The distance that separated the young Tennyson from any true sexual emotion is better gauged, perhaps, by a comparison between his own response and that of his brother Charles to the presence in the house of their sisters' French governess: whereas Charles, one year older, fell deeply in love, and has left unmistakable traces of that unhappy passion in the *Poems by Two Brothers*, Alfred, during the same period, was humorously addressing the young woman as 'most adorable mistress of my heart,' and 'my incomparable Dulcinea,' and signing his letters to her, 'in the truest spirit of knight-errantry, Yours ever, Don Quixote.'

What then—ignoring for the moment the evidence of *The Princess* and the subject of his marriage—what do we know of the idiosyncrasies of Alfred Tennyson's taste on the subject of women? Very

¹ Emily Tennyson is described by Mrs. Warre Cornish as having blue eyes. But cf. Hallam Tennyson: 'All the Tennyson sons and daughters except Frederick had . . . dark eyes and hair'; and Arthur Hallam: 'Thy dark eyes close to mine appear . . .'

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little, and nearly all, as it turns out, negative in character. We hear that he preferred the 'pure and maidenly' condition of the virgin to that of the married woman. That he considered women 'much better (morally)' than men. That he disliked Harriet Martineau. That he disliked, equally, Caroline Norton (no Diana of the Crossways for him, it seems). We hear, with sympathy, that he disliked pedantry in women. We hear also that he disliked to see a woman's whole ear exposed. We hear that he disliked, even more, the sight of a woman's legs; at the theatre on one occasion, 'when the ballet-girls trouped in wearing "*une robe qui ne commence qu'à peine, et qui finit tout de suite,*"' Tennyson rushed at once out of the box, and could on no account be induced to return there again. Trivia, admittedly; but if straws show which way the wind is blowing, they can also testify that the wind is not blowing at all; a possibility not without bearing, perhaps, on the flaccid lines addressed by the poet to his 'gentle Marion.'

Love is a vine, and in the hot
And southern slopes he takes delight;
He curls his tendrils in thy light,
But his grape clusters ripen not:
But mild affection taketh root
And prospers in thy placid light.

Mild affection! It is startling, comparing the tempo, if not the temperature, of *Marion* with that of *Fatima*, to find that the two poems are the product not only of the same hand, but of the same comparatively limited period of time. That period—roughly the years 1829–32—which gave us the insipid *Rosalind*, *Madeline*, *Eleänore* sequence, gave us also *Mariana*, *The Lady of Shalott*, *Fatima* and *Oenone*. What was it, then, that in the one case inhibited, in the other released the power of poetic expression? A fundamental change of rôle on the part of the poet. The inferior poems, it will be seen, are those in which, objectively, the dutiful lover, Tennyson addresses himself to a woman: it is only when a reversal takes place, when, speaking as a woman, as *Mariana* or *Fatima* or *Oenone*, Tennyson memorably invokes the lover so ardently awaited by each, that true passion is released, and with it the deeper springs of creative power. In all

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six poems concerned (for *Hero to Leander* shares with the others a basic affinity of mood) the situation is essentially the same: medieval or classical, *Mariana*, *Hero to Leander*, *The Lady of Shalott*, *Mariana in the South*, *Fatima* and *Oenone* are all variations on a single theme: the 'desolate loneliness,' as Hallam called it, of a woman deserted, denied, in solitude, the life-giving presence of her lover. (Perhaps *St. Agnes*, written before the end of 1833, should be included amongst them, although it is reunion with the Heavenly Bridegroom that is here awaited.) Another, and more subtle, variation upon the theme is to be found in *The Palace of Art*, where the poet's soul, represented as a woman, lives in self-elected isolation, surrounded (in the first edition) by a very questionable collection of *objets d'art et de vertu*. Isolated, through art, from the impact of everyday life, the soul—'A many-facéd glass'—is here much in the same position as The Lady of Shalott, who, contemplating the external world through the medium of a mirror, weaves the shadow-forms of men and women into an unending web of her own creation. When, 'half sick of shadows,' she turns from art to life, the transition kills her; but the Soul, a fallen woman redeemed by Apostolic intervention,¹ is expelled from her Ivory Tower in order to undergo a course of moral rehabilitation in 'a cottage in the vale.'

The young Alfred Tennyson's preoccupation with what one may call the Mariana theme (foreshadowed, at Somersby, by an Ovidian poem on the subject of a girl who died for love of the Apollo Belvedere) was accompanied in boyhood by other emotional yearnings that, stretching out beyond the walls of the Rectory, beyond the known limits of the family circle, found expression, at last, in the lines that the youthful poet addressed to *Friendship*.

But where art thou, thou comet of an age,
Thou phoenix of a century? Perchance
Thou art but of those fables which engage
And hold the minds of men in giddy trance.
Yet, be it so, and be it all romance,
The thought of thine existence is so bright

¹ 'Tennyson,' said R. C. Trench, future Archbishop of Dublin, 'Tennyson, we cannot live in art.'—'Many a poet,' added Hallam warningly, 'has gone on blindly in his artist pride.'

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With beautiful imaginings—the glance
Upon thy fancied being such delight,
That I will deem thee Truth, so lovely is thy might !

A similar sense of expectancy, a moment, almost, of fore-knowledge, inspired the poem entitled *I wander in darkness and sorrow*, and its companion piece, *On the moon-light shining upon a Friend's Grave*.

Show not, O Moon, with pure and liquid beam,
That mournful spot, where Memory fears to tread ;
Glance on the grove, or quiver in the stream,
Or tip the hills—but shine not on the dead :
It wounds the lonely hearts that still survive,
And after bury'd friends are doom'd to live.

It is as curious as it is moving to hear in these early poems, faint but unmistakable, the preliminary phrases of themes later elaborated in *In Memoriam*, and to realise that when, a few months after the poems were published, Alfred Tennyson left Somersby for Cambridge, he was moving towards a fulfilment already anticipated ; emotionally prepared, by

spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise,

alike for the friendship and for the death of Arthur Hallam. The Mariana poems, published nine months before the culminating tragedy, are, in a sense, the poetry of the hiatus, of the stillness preceding the storm.

The Rope

BY FLORA ARMITAGE

“**M**OUNTAINEERING,” said Jensen, “is like mathematics ; it requires all of your concentration. Unless you are prepared to give it that, you may as well give up now, for you will never be any good as a climber, no matter what your reserve of strength or endurance. Is that clear ?” The two boys nodded. It was clear to them that he did not expect them to give up now ; he expected them to go on and make the effort of concentration both he and it demanded. There never was any choice, really.

“Another thing,” Jensen continued from his graceful stance, one foot above the other on the rock slab, “fear is a luxury you cannot afford on mountains. It will destroy your judgement and rob you of your life likely enough, if you give way to it.” But he was quick to add, with a short laugh : “I’m not suggesting that you should not cultivate a healthy regard for danger ; that you must do. The reckless climber is a hazard to others as well as to himself.”

But where did fear end and a healthy regard for danger begin ? wondered Arnold the elder of the two boys by three months. The prospect before him burned in his blood, yet strangely he was not afraid as he had thought he might have been. He glanced quickly at Jensen who was looking at him as though these cautions had been uttered for his benefit, but as usual, he had to look away again. Meeting Jensen’s eye was always difficult. Instead, Arnold studied George his friend and class-mate to see how he was taking it. George he observed was merely trying to suppress his excitement ; you could hardly say he was afraid.

They stood on the threshold of a great terrace of grey-black rock glinting here and there with mica diamonds and tilted in a gentle thirty degree incline at the end of a stony defile they had followed

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several hundred feet from the foot of the mountain. George was physically the smaller of the two boys, smaller than the three months difference in their ages warranted, and outwardly he was the more easily enthusiastic. It was he who had gone up to Jensen one afternoon just before Easter and said boldly: "Please, sir, would you take MacLean and me climbing during the holidays? We are both very keen and we've done quite a bit of hill-walking lately." Arnold was not sure that he had not himself instigated the adventure all the same; he had certainly lured George into approaching Jensen. Ever since they had discovered he was an accomplished mountaineer with the Matterhorn and Mont Blanc to his credit, they had discussed between themselves whether they should ask him to take them out. The question was who had nerve enough to ask him? Not Arnold, certainly.

Jensen at thirty-seven was an impressive figure. His face, olive-skinned and smooth, was long and finely moulded with a chiselled nose and chin and a wide, strong mouth. A Roman face really, yet with the added grace and mobility of classic Greece and a charm, a piquancy of smile that might well have been Celtic. His hair was dark, worn quite short, closely brushed against the skull so that it fitted his head like a silk cap. For the rest, he was moderately tall, lean, strong and in magnificent form with an unconscious lissomness that made for graceful movement.

It was said that even the staidest of women sometimes lost their heads in Jensen's presence, while the more unstable of the sex behaved very much like the ladies of Upper Egypt in the presence of Potiphar's steward, though with less drastic results. But Jensen was no ladies' man. He had a plain and devoted wife and two lively little pig-tailed daughters; clearly he had no interest in looking elsewhere for his pleasures. The two boys had heard all this frivolous talk repeated, but even on a holiday they tended to thrust it aside, inhibited by their everyday awe of him in the rôle of mathematics master, charming, exacting and sometimes surprisingly ruthless.

In class Jensen would tolerate slackness in no one, insisting that work done for him be done intelligently and with a high degree of excellence. For bright boys spurred on by pride of achievement and a desire to please him, this was easy enough. Those not so bright

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were apt to spend their hours under him in exquisite torment, mentally flagellated by their frantic wish to satisfy him, their despair at their own inadequacy and their fear of humiliation if they failed. His favourite pedagogic theory was that if you deliberately set abnormally high standards and then by will or authority forced up the efforts to meet them, you would inevitably obtain a good level of work from the mediocre while the brilliant would excel themselves. But in justice to him it should be said he showed no favouritism. For this as much as for his charm, the class esteemed him highly, for boys will like a strong, even a ruthless master if he is also a fair one. The two boys Jensen was taking up the mountain were representatives of the two categories, the mediocre and the brilliant, yet his treatment of them was identical.

They had paused on the northeast flank of the mountain from which they intended roughly to follow the sun around it. The air was sharp but not cold, though it would be much colder before they descended. Plumes of cirrus cloud lightly feathered the morning sky, but mostly it was blue and clear and the day promised well. Jensen wore a white wool cap and white sweater so that, as leader, his outline and movements against the dark rock would be emphasised. Well-worn corduroy breeches tucked into long socks of grey wool with heavier white inner socks turned down over his boots completed his dress. To the boys, accustomed to seeing him in lounge suit and academic gown, he appeared startlingly informal. The boys themselves were dressed in old flannel trousers, battered sweaters and the climbing boots they had bought on his instructions. Extra clothing, in case they needed it, was carried in rucksacks on their backs, and Arnold had the privilege of carrying Jensen's windbreaker jacket.

With a reassuring smile, Jensen now divested himself of the coil of white rope which he had carried over his shoulder. "We are going to rope up here," he told them. "It isn't really necessary for another hundred feet or so, but it is my experience that nothing inspires confidence in climbing like a rope." He knotted one end around his waist with a bowline as he spoke and pulled it in tight. "Arnold, you shall be middleman of our party while George here is endman," he continued, deftly making the middleman's loop and throwing it to Arnold. It was the first time he had called either of

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the boys by their Christian names and they felt themselves flush like girls at the strangeness of it.

When the roping was completed, Jensen turned again and spoke quite softly to them, as though he were quoting poetry. "A roped party is more closely united, the separate wills of individuals are joined into a stronger common will." Do you know who said that? One of the greatest of climbers, George Leigh Mallory who gave his life to Everest." Arnold felt his spirits rise on a wave of incredible happiness. They were tied to Jensen, their wills merged in his will, united irrevocably to him. When momentarily Jensen moved away holding the slack of rope between them, Arnold felt the slight tug at his waist which followed naturally from his leader's movements. And Jensen's dark eyes flashed over them searchingly.

"For the next two hundred feet," he said, "we are to ascend and at the same time make a traverse to the left. We shall be moving at first over slabs formed very much like this—a sort of causeway really, steep, but not difficult. The hard work will come later. Are you ready?"

"Yes, sir." Out of habit it was a classroom answer.

"You need not call me 'sir' here unless it is easier for you," said Jensen smiling. It was easier, and they decided to stick to it. 'Mr. Jensen' came awkwardly and tied their tongues, and anything else would have seemed insolence.

They kept close together as they mounted the causeway carrying the slack of rope looped between them. For a time the friction of their nailed boots on the rock was the only sound as each boy remained folded in his separate cocoon of thought striving to maintain an upright position on the slabs, and Jensen did not choose to draw them out. To tell the truth, George was not wholly satisfied with his position as endman of the party. He felt that Arnold had taken an unfair advantage, had usurped the position of middleman, though how he was at a loss to explain. There were moments when George felt, unrewardingly, that he was roped only to Arnold, while Arnold he knew must be aware every instant of his union with Jensen. But then he consoled himself: it was one rope that joined the three of them, and the end which was tied securely around his own body had its beginning in Jensen. Without Jensen to lead them, neither Arnold

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nor himself could hope to reach the crest of the mountain and return. They were bound to Jensen by more than rope alone ; they were bound to him in faith of his power and skill.

* * * * *

At the head of the causeway Jensen called another halt, and this time they sat down, still roped, on the smooth rock. Except for that one pause at the foot of the slabs, they had been climbing, though not arduously, for over three hours and the rest was a welcome one. Already they had ascended above the level of the surrounding hills, and their point of eminence afforded a wide panorama of hill and valley : the sapphire glint of a lake, the lattice-work of glen and highland meadow. In a gap to the south, an umbrella of pearly alto-cumulus was spread majestically, as though over the head of a sultan at a *divan*. They had carried with them some biscuits and bars of chocolate, and being hungry, the boys now fell to and devoured them while Jensen outlined the next line of strategy against the mountain. His voice was soft and precise, as when in the classroom he propounded the functions of Sturm's theorem, yet there was an added warmth in it, and he sat at his ease on the rock close to them smoking his first cigarette of the day.

He had chosen this particular route on the mountain, he told them, not because it was an easy one to climb—as if it would have occurred to either of them to suppose he might have chosen anything easy—but because it was a relatively sound one. “ The rock is good except for a few rotten spots which we shall avoid, and there are good holds all the way up.” The smoke of Jensen's cigarette blew away over to Arnold, sweet and pungent. Jensen, he remembered, smoked only Turkish cigarettes, one of the few fads he had cultivated. George was attentive, sitting with hands clasped over his knees, his face vivid with keenness and intelligence, his eyes full of innocent adoration. But Jensen continued speaking of the mountain, not looking at either of them.

“ It offers some good examples of the special problems of rock climbing—there's a nice little chimney near the summit ridge, for instance. As we move up on to the more difficult parts of the south buttress, I shall test every hold before I trust either myself or you on it.

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I want you to move carefully, evenly and with deliberation, and above all, I want no thoughtless scrambling. Mountaineering is an art as well as a sport ; it is also a craft which you must learn with care."

The boys were perhaps a little less shy with him by now. George, at least, was able to ask questions of Jensen and to engage in discussion with him. Even Arnold, though quiet, nearly forgot who Jensen was ; he looked so different. Up to a point he even seemed different, but the edge of intolerable dominion was still there. It was not to be sure the ordinary dominion of schoolmasters ; enough of that had come Arnold's way in fifteen years for him to have developed a contempt for it. Contempt was his defence against dominion, and it was part of his difficulty where Jensen was concerned that he could not be contemptuous.

He remembered a time shortly after he had come under Jensen's tutelage when Jensen, leaning over his desk, had swiftly covered the top three lines of a blank page with his characteristically sharp, condensed digits and symbols, as perfect in their way as a band of Kuffic script. "There is your model," he had said with an ominous amiability. "I want you to build a series of examples from it, using the coordinates X and Y. From there you may go on to solve the problems on page twenty, using *all* of your intelligence to arrive at the correct solutions. I will allow you a margin for error of three per cent—no more." The light touch on the shoulder with which he moved away was, Arnold had felt, half encouragement, half threat. Left to himself he would have bitten the end of his pen in quiet desperation, but Jensen had placed a strong curb on all such nervous habits. So he sat looking down at the page, his forehead drawn and moist with tension, his eyes blurred in agony, with the digits and symbols of the model dancing and winking before him.

Gradually Arnold had been able to force his reluctant brain to cope with them. He *must* fulfil the task set him ; he *must* succeed. It was no use being deceived by Jensen's casual manner ; beneath it ran a will of fire and ice. If only he could once prove his ability to Jensen ; if only he could once exceed himself. O heaven, if only he could break through that incandescent power which had him in thrall, that terrible omniscience ! Yet when he had mounted the causeway roped to Jensen, he felt himself absorbed by that incandescent

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power—and absorbing it. Almost he could feel the power like an electric current pulsating along the rope from Jensen to himself.

Jensen looked at his watch and sprang to his feet with a sudden grace. "We've got to get moving," he told them. "I am allowing a little over four hours to reach the summit ridge, which is ample, but I don't want to spend any more time on halts than is necessary. One thing," he continued when Arnold and George were on their feet, "I told you what Mallory said about the rope. It isn't just a mechanical contrivance to hold you up; it is the bond which from now on unites us. True, I shall be leading, and upon the skill and judgement of the leader depends the success of any climb. But ultimately in a climbing party each man is in the hands of the other."

'Jensen is in my hands,' thought Arnold, and the idea of it was almost more than he could bear.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

For what seemed a measureless time they had inched their way along a ledge in a right-hand traverse with the steep black wall of the mountain harsh against their hands and bodies, and a sheer drop of more than a hundred feet below. It was not dangerous, but it was exhilarating. Where the great overhanging canopy of the buttress kept the sun from it, the rock was chill as well as hard, and high up, there were still remnants of snow packed into the crevices. From time to time Jensen spoke encouragingly to the boys and told them how to place hands and feet to achieve a better balance. When the ledge ended their leader stopped; they closed in and saw above them their next test of nerve and stamina. Thirty feet up was a platform indented in the side of the mountain, and from it another rocky shelf led tenuously away in a left-hand traverse towards the buttress. It was an arduous climb for novices, but Jensen was an expert who trusted in his ability to lead, and he had been hardening the boys on less formidable courses for the past few days.

While they looked on tense and alert, he belayed the rope around a firm pinnacle and then showed Arnold how to pay out the remaining rope gradually over his shoulder as he himself ascended. Without haste, seemingly without effort, testing each hand and foot hold as he went, Jensen then mounted the rock as though it were no more

The Rope

than an unusually severe staircase. It looked so simple that when his turn came to go up, Arnold was quite undaunted. That it was not so easy as it appeared he soon discovered, but throughout his uneasy ascent, Jensen was above him keeping watch over him, supporting and guiding him but never hauling up on the rope. Once Arnold's foot slipped off the rock hold and for a sickening moment he foundered and struggled in desperate certainty that he would fall, but Jensen quickly drew in the rope and held it tight until he had gained a new footing. Arnold was to remember that.

"Don't fight the mountain," he heard Jensen's voice chiding him from above—he dared not look. "If you lose your foothold on a pitch, the man next above or below you will support you. That is why we are moving singly roped together."

George followed Arnold without mishap. Once united on the platform which was large enough to hold the three of them, Jensen let them rest before proceeding. The crest meanwhile was hidden now by the great black bastion which they must surmount before they could reach it. The silence of mountains, aloof from the populous valley levels and holy by contrast, folded them in where they rested, broken only by the rhythmic bellows of their breathing and the soft shrill music of the wind as it sang lightly past them. Jensen regarded Arnold critically. "Are you all right, MacLean?" he asked. "I think so, sir." The slip had shaken him but he would not, he could not let Jensen see that. George, questioned in turn, gave assurance that he was whole and still eager, aglow with the triumph of his own successful campaign against the rock, though a little sorry for Arnold. It might perhaps have been more just if Arnold had triumphed instead of himself, but there was no telling how the odds would go before the day was out.

They pushed doggedly on and up, the rope binding them together as they achieved the shelf and then stepped warily across a high eroded wall that was like some vast carved reredos with the faces of all its saintly images blurred into hopeless anonymity. In less than four hours they had reached the buttress which was flanked by a long precipitous gully, and over the buttress they now must climb to achieve the chimney and lever up through it to the summit ridge above. Jensen was well aware that it was an ultimate and rigorous

Flora Armitage

test for his novice climbers, but having brought them up so far he wanted them to try it. If they balked, then he would take them down, but his will was that they should not balk, and his will came to them along the rope that united them as clearly as though he had spoken it out loud.

Carefully he instructed them. The rope would be belayed over a rock protuberance as before, and Arnold would pay it out slowly as he had been taught to do. When Arnold was ready and had taken his stance, Jensen started to climb the buttress with the steep, broken wall of the gully to his left. He was an economic as well as a graceful climber, with never a wasted or erratic movement. He mounted the buttress steadily, agile as a cat, feeling out his holds, his nerves poised and tensile, his muscles instantly obedient. Three-quarters of the way to the top the overhang halted him momentarily, but not for long. His body pressed against the rock, the dazzling white of his sweater luminous against it, seemed to the boys watching below not so much to hesitate as to pause and gather strength. He rounded the overhang a few moments later, achieved the buttress and was lost to sight. Then he was ready to bring Arnold up.

Arnold had watched Jensen with all the concentrated focus of his tautened mind, resolving passionately to emulate his ease, and with George belaying him, he made a good start. It was the overhang which foiled him, constrained and vanquished him. It loomed over him like a canopy of doom beyond which he could see nothing, while below him the buttress fell down and dissolved into the gully dropping sheer away under his feet, treacherous and exposed. It was impossible for him to move; he could only cling frozen to the rock, the moments spun out infernally, while the sweat broke on his forehead in spite of the cold air. Jensen held the rope between them taut and waited, but Arnold did not move.

"What is the matter down there, MacLean?" Jensen called down at last, and from the well of his agony Arnold had to answer, "I can't move, I can't!"

Perhaps Jensen had foreseen this moment with Arnold, but he had certainly gambled on it not happening. He had placed Arnold second on the rope to put him on his mettle, and so far, his performance had been adequate. Jensen was not disposed to let him ruin it now

The Rope

by freezing on the rock so near the summit's achievement. Once let him get away with that, and he would never be any good on mountains ; and Jensen, who was as uncompromising a teacher of mountain climbing as he was of mathematics, would have none of it. He had led too many novices in both fields not to know that they needed bullying at times.

"Let yourself go, MacLean," he called down from his hidden eminence. "Think of yourself as being just as secure as you would be on a footpath. Stop gripping yourself in this unnecessary tension and you will find you can move again. The ascent is to the right of the overhang, and it's no more difficult than what you have already done." Arnold felt Jensen's will goading him on but he could not obey, could not move ; he could only cling to his tenuous holds feeling that the elongated minutes were his entire life-span lived out under the dominion of the rock and Jensen's will, each bent ruthlessly on mastering him. He no longer felt the exhilaration and comfort of the rope ; he was unaware of it, and yet it was the rope which held him still and not his uncertain feet or numb fingers.

When Jensen saw how it was with Arnold he made his ultimate concession. Abandoning the next line of ascent, the chimney and the summit ridge, he began to climb down to Arnold, confident that once Arnold could see him he would be persuaded out of his paralysis. Arnold heard the scraping of Jensen's boots on the rock ; he knew Jensen was climbing down to him and that hidden and delicate centre of his being which both worshipped and feared Jensen stirred and trembled. If the rock conquered he knew his hands and feet would loosen on their fragmentary holds, and he would drop down like a dead fly drops from a wall. Yet if Jensen mastered his fear, his horrible inertia, it would be the end of his hope of ever proving himself : the end of hope, the end of freedom, or the promise at least of freedom. Under his fear the knowledge of it pressed down on him, and in the stress of the two tensions, he bit on his tongue until he could taste the salt tang of blood.

The descent complete, Jensen came level with Arnold, his fine features clearly visible set in their mould of resolution, lightly filmed now with displeasure ; but his voice when he spoke was gentle enough—ominously gentle. "What is all this ?" he asked.

Flora Armitage

"I don't know, sir," Arnold gasped out through his pain.

"Don't you though? Then I'll tell you—it's fear, and I warned you fear was destructive. But you are not going to give in to it, MacLean; I won't allow you."

In that instant of time Arnold found himself praying that the rock would win, that he would be flung off it and dashed against it: better that than this bitter forfeiture of will—will to surrender, if need be, to fear, to weakness and mediocrity. But if he were flung off, Jensen would be flung off with him: from Jensen there was no escape. The rope bound them one to another, and the rope had betrayed him. Even as the thought came and emptied itself in his mind, Jensen edged closer to him on the rock until his presence was the one irresistible fact.

"Let us understand each other, MacLean," said Jensen. "Are you prepared to trust yourself to me instead of to your fear and to do what I ask you to do?"

"If I can, sir."

"I am going to resume my stance above and you are going to take yourself in hand and follow me up—is that clear? You are not to be anxious about *where* the holds are. Simply move up: the holds are there and your feet and hands will find them."

Arnold felt his incapacitating fear withdraw from nerve and muscle at the nearness of Jensen's persuasive voice, the proximity of his body with its numinous power, the immediate and overwhelming vigour of his mind. He clung still to the rock under the overhang, but not as one waiting for the abyss to claim him. Yet his mind remained frozen and rigid still, and though the responsive impulse to obey Jensen, to yield, to satisfy, to excel, broke over him in hot waves until he felt sick and faint from them, he could not climb up.

* * * * *

Moving together in silence they climbed down to where George had waited in morbid expectancy of a horror which did not quite evolve and yet which ever threatened. The summit was not reached and could not now be. For Arnold its vision was lost, and the white flame which had burned in his brain earlier in the day was extinguished. Yet he was left with a knowledge more certain than ecstasy and more

The Rope

abiding, that his fear had saved him : that in defeat he had found release. He would have to strive still under Jensen as long as they came together, but no more in the compulsion of love and fear. The intolerable dominion had been broken and would never again rule him ; the terrible omniscience was blunted and in its blunting he was brought, unexpectedly, into peace.

In Honour of Mr. John Betjeman

BY PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR

Eagle-borne spread of the Authorised Version,
Beadles and bell-ropes, pulpits and pews,
Sandwiches spread for a new excursion
And *patum peperium* under the yews !

Erastian peal of Established Church-bells !
(Cuckoo-chimes in Cistercian towers)
Bugloss and briony border our search. Bells
Toll the quarters and toll the hours.

Unscrew the thermos. Some village Hampden
Swells the sward. Fill the plastic cup
For a toast to Brandon, to Scott and to Camden,
To dripstone and dogtooth, with bottoms up !

Herringbone-tweed (one more ? Shall we risk it ?)
Mimics the moulding from neck to knee.
(Ginger beer, and a Peek Frean biscuit ?)
Then here's to Pugin with three times three !

Basketed bikes on the lych-gate leaning
(Headlamp and rearlamp, pump and mac)
Bask in the sunshine, the privet screening
Raleigh and Rudge till we both get back ;

Back from the church where the rood-screen false is
Bogus both squint and architrave—
Lord ! Let an Old Marlburian's Dolcis
Quicken the echoes of the nave.

Let an Old Marlburian's Veldtschoen waken
Ghostly incumbents along the gloom,
And the rattle of anthracite long since shaken
Out with the slag in the boiler-room.

Raven-black sway the phantom cassocks,
Ruby the silk of an M.A. hood ;
Sweet is the incense of fragrant hassocks
And tiger-lilies and Ronuk'd wood,

Sarum-chants of celestial cities,
Rustic anthems in harmony,
Quavering rune of the *Nunc Dimittis*,
Gaslit groan of *Abide with me*.

Back to the lamplight, back to the crumpets,
Under the cliff by the seaside path
An Old Marlburian treads through the limpets
Home through the sunset's aftermath.

The 7.10 whistles, and helter-skelter
Wild foam flies by the wayward sea ;
Bladderwrack pops under Lotus and Delta—
Holy Saint Pancras, pray for me !

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

OSBERT LANCASTER'S more recent books include *Classical Landscape with Figures* and *Drayneflete Revealed*. His new volume of pocket cartoons *Studies from the Life* will be published in the autumn by Gryphon Books.

PETER MAYNE'S first book *The Alleys of Marrakesh* will be followed by another travel book which is a personal account of Pakistan and the author's return to visit his Pathan friends on the North-West Frontier.

SIR KENNETH CLARK. Chairman of Arts Council, Director of National Gallery 1934-45. His publications include *The Gothic Revival* (Constable), *Leonardo da Vinci* (Cambridge University Press), *Florentine Paintings: Fifteenth Century* (Faber), *Landscape into Art* (John Murray).

H. E. BATES. His recent novels are *Love for Lydia*, *The Nature of Love* and *The Feast of July* is to be published in the autumn (Michael Joseph). He has recently completed a history of the Bahamas which was begun by the late Hilary St. George Saunders.

JOHN CONNELL, leader-writer and author of *The House of Herod's Gate* (Sampson Low), *Midstream* (Sampson Low), *W. E. Henley* (Constable) (James Tait Black Memorial Prize 1949), and *Time and Chance* (Constable).

JOYCE CARY studied art at Edinburgh and later joined the Nigerian Political Service. His novels include *A Fearful Joy*, *A Prisoner of Grace*, *Except the Lord* (Michael Joseph). His new book *Not Honour More* will be published in the autumn. He has written several books on political philosophy and poetry.

ANNE RIDLER has had five verse plays published and three books of poetry, of which the last was *The Golden Bird* (Faber). She has just completed another verse play entitled *A Garden Plot*.

DAN JACOBSON is a young writer who was born in Johannesburg and lives in Kimberley, except when working as a labourer on a collective settlement in Israel and a teacher in London. He is at work on a novel.

FREYA STARK'S first book was *The Valley of the Assassins*, based on articles written for the CORNHILL. Following *Perseus in the Wind* and her three volumes of autobiography *Traveller's Prelude*, *Beyond Euphrates* and *The Coast of Incense*, she has just finished a book of her travels in Turkey, *Ionian, A Quest*, to be published in the autumn.

BETTY MILLER'S novels include *A Room in Regent's Park*, *On the Side of the Angels*, *The Death of the Nightingale* (Robert Hale). Her last book was *Robert Browning, A Portrait* (John Murray) and she has edited the hitherto unpublished letters of *Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Miss Mitford* which will be published later this year.

FLORA ARMITAGE'S family emigrated to America some years ago but she is English by birth. She has written stories and articles and is at present working on a biography.

PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR'S first book *The Traveller's Tree*, a Journey Through the Caribbean Islands, was awarded the Heinemann Foundation Prize 1950 and a Kemsley Award in 1951. His CORNHILL articles on monasteries were published in a limited edition under the title *A Time to Keep Silence* (Queen Anne Press). His novel *The Violins of Saint Jacques* was first published in the CORNHILL (Murray and Verschoyle). He is now translating and editing the diary of a Cretan covering the German occupation, and is at work on a book on Greece.

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